

JEFFERSON JOURNAL

March/April 2021

Ashland Independent
Film Fest Celebrates
Double Decade
With Double Feature



The Members' Magazine of Jefferson Public Radio



Cornerstones

[TRACKING OREGON'S PROGRESS]
ECONOMIC MOBILITY and BELONGING IN OREGON

For the first time in U.S. history, young adults are less likely to earn more than their parents, shattering the time-honored belief that if you work hard, you'll prosper. Family circumstances, educational experiences, race and ethnicity and a ZIP code all play a significant role on a child's ability to get ahead — determining the rest of their life. **To find out how a ZIP code impacts opportunity, download OCF's newly-released report, "Cornerstones: Economic Mobility and Belonging in Oregon,"** and learn about ways to advance economic mobility for future generations of Oregonians.



RESEARCH

VISIT [OREGONCF.ORG/TOP2020](https://oregoncf.org/top2020) TO DISCOVER KEY AREAS OF INVESTMENT AND POLICY CHANGE NEEDED TO CREATE MORE HIGH OPPORTUNITY NEIGHBORHOODS IN OREGON.



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FEATURED

6 Ashland Independent Film Fest Celebrates Double Decade With Double Feature

By Angela Decker

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COVER: *The Water Man*, directed by David Oyelowo, is the opening film at this year's AIFF.

CREDIT: KAREN BALLARD

Jefferson Public Radio welcomes your comments:

1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520-5025 | 541-552-6301 | 1-800-782-6191
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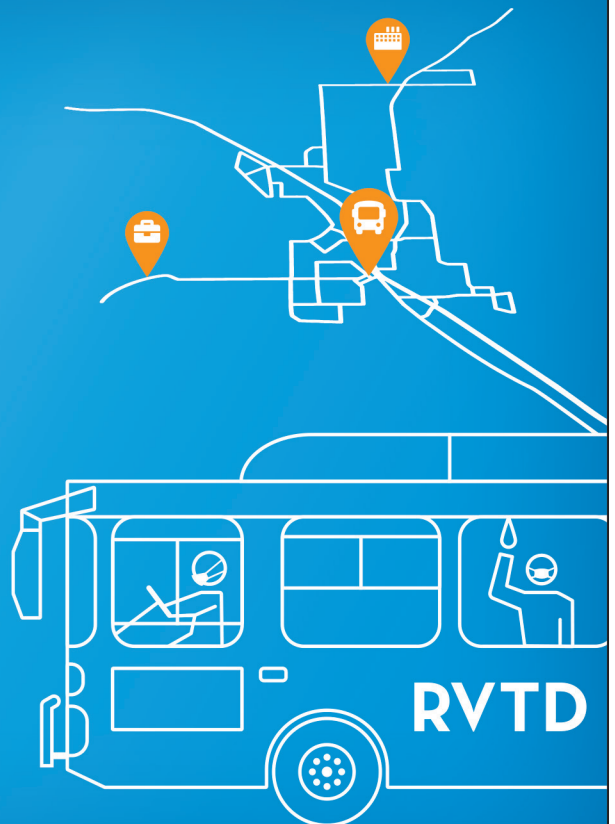
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Commentary On Commentary

Like so many people, the events of January 6th commanded my attention. I was working at home that day and connected to JPR's News & Information Service webstream, which provided regular newscasts throughout the day. As I listened, I started to become aware that the "rally" taking place in Washington D.C. was turning into a dangerous and consequential event for our country. No longer satisfied with audio only, I wanted to see what was happening and so I turned on my television. Since this was a breaking news story, I went to CNN and watched as the violent mob overwhelmed the police guarding the U.S. Capitol, invaded the building, and attempted to overthrow our government and harm our democratically elected representatives as they performed their Constitutional duty to count the state-certified results of the November election.

As the events of that day unfolded, I became more aware of the news sources that were available to me, the content being broadcast and the sources I chose to rely on in that moment. I have written frequently in this space about the need for citizens to be savvy, intentional consumers of news, and I was trying to walk the walk.

After flipping through several channels that I had access to, I landed back on CNN since it seemed to have the most current information about developments on the ground and was conveying timely statements made by public officials about what would take place next.

But, as the day evolved, CNN's coverage gradually shifted to include an increasing amount of commentary and opinion from its stable of personalities. After a while, it felt like the amount of commentary exceeded the amount of news coverage. Also noteworthy was the fact that many CNN news hosts easily pivoted to offering commentary, perhaps to fill the air time that existed when "special coverage" continued even though no new developments were able to be reported.

In reflecting about my experience as a news consumer on that memorable news day, I empathized with the challenge of everyday citizens of every political stripe trying to get a straight take on what's going on in the world from credible sources they can trust. For me, CNN's reporting was polluted by so much commentary, even by its bona fide journalists. The network's lack of discipline separating opinions from reporting and al-

lowing journalists to freely offer their judgements and conclusions created a real trust gap for me as a consumer. I was willing to hear opinions by a diverse range of people with different perspectives, but I wanted them clearly distinguished from news and the journalists who report it.

The advent of the 24/7 cable news network created news outlets based primarily on commentary and opinion. With more time to fill than there was news to report, these networks filled the airwaves with pundits rendering their opinions because it was easier and cheaper than hiring reporters to conduct real journalism. And, that's where we stand today. Most Americans get their news from these cable "news" outlets, which seamlessly blend some reporting with a heavy dose of commentary and political opinion -- letting the consumer figure out which is which.

That evening I grew weary of the images on TV and tuned in *All Things Considered* on JPR. I didn't hear Ari Shapiro or Mary Louise Kelly offer me a single opinion of what they thought about the events that took place in D.C. that day. Instead, I heard facts about exactly what happened, first-hand accounts from people who were there, informed interviews with law enforcement officials and elected representatives from different political parties, context from academics and historians, and information about statements released by former and current political and civic leaders. It was good to be home.

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Paul Westhelle is
JPR's Executive Director.

Despite dual disasters, the festival not only survived everything 2020 hurled its way, it blossomed in some unexpected ways.

Ashland Independent Film Fest Celebrates Double Decade With Double Feature

By **Angela Decker**

The Ashland Independent Film Festival has been a growing cultural force in our region, and increasingly around the country, over its 20 years in existence. Yes, 20 years. To celebrate, AIFF is planning a two-part festival this year, a sort of double feature. The overarching theme is “Rising from the Ashes,” highlighting the festival’s and the community’s rise from metaphorical and literal fires last year. The first part of the festival runs April 15–29 and will be entirely virtual. The second part will be live and outdoors, June 24–28.

The live, outdoor part will take place at ScienceWorks in Ashland and the Walkabout Brewery in Medford, where there will be nighttime screenings. AIFF artistic director, Richard Herskowitz says the pandemic and going virtual last year has fundamentally changed the film festival. “We expect there will always be a virtual component to the festival,” he said. “We’ve also introduced a new monthly series called *Best of the Fests* on our new virtual channel. The entire festival is now much more of a year-round program.”

AIFF is even planning some programming for the storefront window of its new office and film center on Ashland’s East Main Street. “A year ago, when we moved to Main Street, our intention was to make the film center the hub of the festival, and open it for presentations and screenings,” said Herskowitz. “We had to close it temporarily for the pandemic, though we’ve been showing films in the window and offering some amazing

window displays,” he said. “It’s fun. We’re doing our part to liven up Main Street and we want to be a big part of the revival that we know is coming.”

2020 tested the film festival’s mettle more than any other time in its history. In addition to illness and death, the Covid-19 pandemic brought business closures and financial gut-punches, especially to cultural festivals.

“Last April, our film festival collapsed,” said Herskowitz. “We were all ready to go with the festival, then the pandemic closures began and we had to cancel everything. We had the catalog ready to go, the guests lined up, the travel and housing plans. It was a really tough time.”

Then, in September, the Alameda fire swept through the Rogue Valley. And yet, despite dual disasters, the festival not only survived everything 2020 hurled its way, it blossomed in some unexpected ways.

With many of the elements already in place for the festival, Herskowitz and his small, but seemingly tireless team were able to produce a three-week virtual film festival in May 2020. “So many filmmakers were counting on us,” said Herskowitz. “We really had no choice, we turned things around and rebuilt. Ours was one of the first virtual film festivals in the world during the pandemic. So we were among the very first to pivot. That’s certainly a rise from the ashes,” he said.

Executive Director, Erica Thompson says one reason for

their quick turnaround to a virtual festival was they had recently explored the idea. “The month before, I had met people who had an online platform. I remember thinking, “We don’t need that,” but then everything changed,” she said. “We were able to connect with them and work on getting all our content online.”

For AIFF, going virtual wasn’t just about getting the films and membership benefits online. They also had to get the audience there. “People were just amazing. The community was incredibly resilient in making their own pivot to online. We have such a strong base of support—local businesses and folks who for the past 20 years have supported this festival,” said Thompson.

Herskowitz adds that community spirit is the heart and soul of the festival. “We were determined to make it as social as we possibly could. We re-invented our opening night bash and our awards bash as events that were happening online. We also wanted to make sure that every single film had a Q&A attached,” he said. “That was a huge undertaking, but we did it. It was a whirlwind for sure.”

The team’s hard work last year paid off in a number of ways. The virtual festival was well attended and they learned some things that will forever change how the festival is organized. “We were concerned that some people would struggle with the technology piece, but in fact a number of people reached out to tell us that they were able to reconnect with the festival online after mobility issues or other issues prevented them from attending,” said Thompson. “They actually found benefit from being able to watch from the comfort of their own home, and they were able to re-engage with our content in a way they haven’t been able to in a while. That was just beautiful.”

Another benefit they found to the online transition was the audience demographic shifted to a wider range age-wise, as well as geographically. “The highest percentage of viewers are 65 and older, but we did see that age range skew younger this year,” said Thompson. To continue reaching more young people, the festival is offering a lower price point for base-level membership. “It’s nice to have that wider reach and to be able to promote both the festival and the city,” said Thompson. “We even got some national recognition for being one of the first festivals to transition online.”

MovieMaker Magazine named AIFF as one of the best online film festivals last year. Over the years, it has also listed AIFF as one of the 50 film festivals worth the entry fee, and Ashland as one of the best places to live and work as a filmmaker. “It all speaks to the fact that Ashland gets an enormous amount of recognition and esteem for a town its size,” said Herskowitz.



Erica Thompson,
AIFF Executive Director



Richard Herskowitz,
AIFF Artistic Director

The Water Man highlights the beauty of Oregon and the horror of wildfires

The Water Man is this year’s opening film, and its director, producer, and star, David Oyelowo, will be the recipient of this year’s AIFF Rogue Award. Oyelowo is probably best known for his portrayal of Dr. Martin Luther King in the film *Selma*, his work in *The Butler*, and the PBS miniseries, *Les Misérables*.

The Water Man is a family film that explores some serious issues, including the threat of an Oregon wildfire. This is his first directing effort and Oyelowo says he was inspired by some of his favorite childhood films. “Growing up, I was a big fan of 1980’s kid-fantasy adventure films such as *E.T.*, *The Goonies*, and *Gremlins*,” he said. “I remember watching those films with all of my family and I set out to create something that draws the whole family together.”

Oyelowo and his wife Jessica have four children, and he says there are few films that strike the right balance for both adults and kids. “We look for films that have just enough adventure, just enough relatable stuff for the kids and the grown-ups, and just enough cinematic scope to keep everyone engaged.”

Like the films of his boyhood, *The Water Man* offers young adventure with a fine balance of danger, heartbreak, self-discovery and magic that all ages can lean into. It focuses on a family recently relocated to a small, Oregon town and coping with the mother’s serious illness. Oyelowo is a father who seems somewhat disconnected from his bookish and imaginative son. Rosario Dawson is the understanding, but gravely sick wife and mother, who possesses a deeper understanding of both of them. Young actor Lonnie Chavis, probably best known for the TV series, *This is Us*, is the couple’s 11-year old son, Gunner, who finds escape from his troubles in fictional stories, and finds hope in a local legend. When he hears tales of the Water Man, a kind of undead specter with mysterious healing powers, Gunner decides that if he can find the Water Man, he’ll be able to get him to help his mother and keep her from dying. He teams up with a slightly older girl who tells dramatic stories of the Water



David Oyelowo makes his directorial debut in the feature-length film, *The Water Man*.

CREDIT: KAREN BALLARD

Man to neighborhood kids in exchange for their small change. The two set off on a quest into the Oregon forest as a wildfire approaches.

While the film embraces Gunner's magical beliefs, it also doesn't shy away from real issues of death and loss. "What we tried to do with the film is juxtapose how grown-ups and kids process not only loss, but how they process the idea of myths and challenges, and family in general," Oyelowo said. "I think Emma Needell, our writer, did a beautiful job of balancing these things. Yes, kids see things differently than grown-ups, but the way they see things shouldn't be dismissed, and each can learn something from the other," he added. "Imagination can help us navigate some of the harder things in life and is a very healthy tool for kids. It's something us grown-ups could use a little more of." The whole film, both in story and structure, is about juxtaposition and the way children see the world vs the way adults do, says Oyelowo.

Oyelowo says his choice of placing a Black family in the very white space of a small Oregon town was absolutely deliberate. "It's another juxtaposition. Looking at the world through the eyes of a child is very different than through the eyes of an adult. The relationship between Gunner and his friend Jo doesn't have any sort of racial tinge to it. They are just kids trying to figure it out," he said. "But the parents in the film certain-

ly feel like fish out of water. It's not to hit heavily over the head, but when you have this black family in a very white environment, that's just an element that you can't deny."

One of the beautiful things about this story, Oyelowo says, is that it is a story about a Black family but it is not rooted in Black struggle. "My hope is that no matter who you are, where you're from, what the color of your skin is, you will see yourself reflected in that family because what they're going through is universal," he said.

Most striking in the film is the wildfire sweeping through the story. It's especially poignant for audience members in Southern Oregon and nearby regions given the devastating fires in 2020. "We filmed it in the summer of 2019, and I remember seeing evidence of previous fires," said Oyelowo. "But the fires last summer were such a weird coincidence. I can't believe how evocative the film was of what happened the following year. We saw images of places where we had shot, places that had just been devastated. It was heartbreaking."

Oyelowo says the backdrop of a wildfire was in Emma Needell's story from the beginning, but where to set the film was up to him. "I knew wherever the film was set, I didn't want to use visual effects to make the forest seem magical," he said. "I wanted a forest that had that inherently, but where a child's imagination could impose the rest, because it's huge and sort of scary

A Preview of AIFF2021 Selections

AIFF will unveil its full slate of films on March 24 at its annual Preview Night and on its website at ashlandfilm.org on March 25. As has been the practice for several years, the festival structures its programming around core themes. *Arts* and *Activism*, subjects that persistently attract independent filmmakers, are perennials, while *Cuba* and *Rising From the Ashes* respond to this year's Schneider Museum exhibition and the region's revival after the fires.

Virtual Festival April 15-29

Rising From The Ashes

Youth v Gov

YOUTH v GOV is the story of America's youngest citizens taking on the world's most powerful government. Twenty-one courageous youth lead a groundbreaking lawsuit, originating in Eugene, OR, against the U.S. government, asserting it has willfully acted over six decades to create our climate crisis.



2040

Motivated by concerns about the planet his 4-year-old daughter would inherit, director Damon Garneau embarked on a global journey to meet innovators and changemakers in the areas of economics, technology, civil society, agriculture, education and sustainability. Drawing

on their expertise, he sought to identify the best solutions, available to us now, that would help improve the health of our planet and the societies that operate within it.

Cuba Si!

Los Hermanos

Virtuoso Afro-Cuban-born brothers—violinist Ilmar and pianist Aldo—live on opposite sides of a geopolitical chasm a half-century wide. Tracking their parallel lives in New York and Havana, their poignant reunion, and their momentous first performances together, *LOS HERMANOS/THE BROTHERS* offers a nuanced, often startling view of estranged nations through the lens of music and family.



and inviting at the same time,” he said. “My production staff sent me photographs of forests all over America, and nowhere quite had the feel of Oregon. The moss-covered trees and rock formations—it was a no-brainer to me.”

Oyewolo had never been to Oregon before. “We just had an incredible time being there and shooting there,” he said. “And Portland had some of the best food I’ve ever had.”

The crew shot scenes in Baker County’s Baker City, Columbia County’s Vernonia, Clackamas County’s Eagle Creek and Astacada, Multnomah County’s Lewis & Clark Recreation site and Horsetail Falls. “It’s just an unbelievable environment,” he said. “There’s so much production value. I truly fell in love with Oregon.”

Local fire-focused films

The festival always supports local and regional independent filmmakers, and this year’s growing list will include some films by local women.

A Medford-based film, *Anchor Point*, looks at women firefighters. “It’s fascinating,” said Herskowitz. “It’s a feminist take on firefighting.”

There’s also work by two female Southern Oregon University graduates who have had long-time connections with the



festival.

Laney d’Aquino has had films in 15 of the 20 festivals. AIFF will offer a retrospective of some of her best films over the past 20 years. She’s working on a new film about the wildfires, and plans to have it ready for the festival in April.

Nisha Burton grew up in Ashland. She’s had previous films in the festival, was even the first winner of the Launch (Student) Film Competition, and now she’s now part of the AIFF programming team.

Burton’s film is tentatively titled, *Like a Hurricane with Fire*, and explores the aftermath of the Alameda Fire and the

The Mali-Cuba Connection/Africa Mia
In the midst of the Cold War, ten young promising musicians from Mali are sent to Cuba to study music and strengthen cultural links between the two socialist countries. Combining Malian and Afro-Cuban influences, they develop a revolutionary new sound and become the iconic ensemble ‘Las Maravillas de Mali’. Richard Minier, a French music producer meets a former member of the band in Bamako and decides to bring the band back together.

Arts

A Kaddish for Bernie Madoff
adapts Rabins’ critically acclaimed original one-woman chamber-rock opera about Portland-based composer Alicia Jo Rabins’ experience working in an artist residency on Wall Street during the 2008 financial collapse. For a year, Rabins wrote songs in a dilapidated office just blocks from the New York Stock Exchange, as she watched the economy come crashing down around her.

Lydia Lunch- The War is Never Over
LYDIA LUNCH – The War Is Never Over
by Beth B is the first career-spanning

documentary retrospective of Lydia Lunch’s confrontational, acerbic and always electric artistry. As New York City’s preeminent No Wave icon from the late 70’s, Lunch has forged a lifetime of music and spoken word performance devoted to the utter right of any woman to indulge, seek pleasure, and to say “f*** you!” as loud as any man.

Activism

American Gadfly

After decades of quiet living, 89 year-old former senator and 2008 presidential candidate Mike Gravel comes out of retirement when a group of teenagers convince him to run for president. Through Senator Gravel’s official Twitter account, the Gravel teens embark on an unlikely adventure to qualify him for the Democratic debates in order to advance an anti-war, anti-corruption, and direct democracy agenda in the 2020 presidential race.

Missing in Brooks County

Two families search for their loved ones who went missing in the vast ranch lands of Brooks County, Texas, the site of more migrant deaths than anywhere

else in the country. On their journey, they meet vigilante ranchers, humanitarian activists, Border Patrol search and rescue teams, and others locked in a proxy version of the national immigration debate.

Live and Outdoors June 24–28

Fanny: The Right to Rock

Originally booked for last year’s April festival, *FANNY: The Right to Rock* (which graced the Jefferson Journal’s March-April 2020 cover) is the untold story of three Filipina American teens who founded a garage band in the 1960s that morphed into Fanny, the first band comprised of women to release an LP with a major label. Despite releasing Top 40 hits and five critically acclaimed albums, counting David Bowie as one of their biggest fans and touring with bands like Chicago and Steely Dan, Fanny faded into the mists of time ... until now. Director Bobbi Jo Hart, a graduate of Southern University, will present the film at ScienceWorks as the outdoor festival’s opening night attraction.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AIFF

February's window display, designed by Lisa Greene, at the AIFF Film Center.

housing inequities in the region that the fire highlighted. She says this film was especially personal. "I feel such a deep connection and heartbreak around what happened here. I wanted to be of service as a filmmaker, to take a deeper dive into the longer effects the fire will have on our community," Burton said. "It was a heart-calling to make a piece that would focus on some specific stories from an insider perspective as well as have a general conversation around wildfires in the region."

While Burton's film discusses problems the fires created, it also invites solutions. "Latinx and low-income community members already suffered from a shortage of affordable housing, and the fire wiped out a huge swath of affordable housing," she said. "I hope the film leads to conversations about how we make the Rogue Valley a place that is not only a space accessible for the well-off or wealthy. Our migrant farmworkers and Latinx people who live here are a huge part of the richness of the valley. How do we make sure to include them in the conversation and keep housing available to everyone?"

Launch Competition gives students a chance to shine

Aimed at K-12 and college kids, AIFF's Launch film competition showcases work by young filmmakers. The categories include grades K-5, 6-8, 9-12, and college undergrads.

This year, recent SOU graduate Kevin Lakin is the winner of AIFF's "Rising From the Ashes" Special Award for his short film *Vairagya*. It's an atmospheric film rich with color, that Lakin says was very personal for him. "The title is Sanskrit for "detachment," said Lakin. I tend to do that a lot in difficult times. I think we all detach and build walls of protection around ourselves," he said. "I want the film to show that we can come out of darkness. That we can transcend anything."

It's the first film he's done on his own and Lakin says he's proud to have it in the festival and hopes it resonates with audiences. "I'd like people who see the film to remember that in

times of difficulty we can rise up and be stronger. It's how you take it and how you choose to live through it."

Ash Williams, an Ashland High School Junior, won honorable mention in the competition. Ash's film, *Burning Up*, pays tribute to the victims of the Alameda fire that hit the Rogue Valley last year. Ash and their family lost their home in the fire. "The fire affected a lot of people physically, emotionally, and spiritually, and I wanted to do something creative that showed my empathy for what everyone is going through," Ash said.

Ash's passion is dancing, and the film features a dance on a burned-out property. "My mother and I worked on the whole project together. I mostly improvised the dance," said Ash. "I hope when the film is over, viewers will feel connected and know that I sympathize with all of these people. I am one of these people."

Películas Cubanas

Every year, AIFF partners with SOU's Schneider Museum to showcase a multimedia exhibit. This year's show features an exhibition of Cuban art from the collection of the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art in Eugene. The exhibit will include a two-screen media installation, and the festival will offer at least three feature films about Cuba. One is called *Los Hermanos*, and focuses on two musician brothers who reunite after one immigrated from Cuba to the United States. *The Mali-Cuba Connection* is a film about the origins of Afro-Cuban music. And lastly, *Nadie*, a history of the Cuban Revolution through the perspective of writer Rafael Alcides.

This year, for the first time, the AIFF officially expanded the scope of the festival competition to include not only films in the U.S., but films throughout the Americas, the entirety of North, South, and Central America.



AIFF and the Schneider Museum of Art have joined forces in a collaboration that features Cuban art and film.

Angela Decker joined JPR as a backup host for *Morning Edition* in 2016, and is now a regular host. She has a long history in journalism, but is a relatively recent convert to broadcasting. When she's not at JPR, Angela is a freelance writer and part-time poet. She's the mother of two hungry teens and too many pets. Angela is delighted to be back hosting *Morning Edition* and working as a producer for *The Jefferson Exchange*.



THE ECONOMY EXPLAINED

GREG ROSALSKY

Just days before Ruth led the Red Sox to the World Series, soldiers returning from Europe brought a new strain of the Spanish flu to Boston.

What 1919 Teaches Us About Pent-Up Demand

1918 should have been a great year for baseball. A young left-handed pitcher named Babe Ruth began the year by pitching an opening-day victory for the Boston Red Sox. Shortly after, Ruth lobbied the team's manager to let him play other positions so he could spend more time at the plate. The strategy paid off, and Ruth began his run as a home-run-hitting superstar, helping lead the Red Sox to the World Series.

But a world war and a deadly pandemic slashed demand to see ballgames in 1918. Just days before Ruth led the Red Sox to the World Series, soldiers returning from Europe brought a new strain of the Spanish flu to Boston, says Georgia Tech historian Johnny Smith, co-author of *War Fever: Boston, Baseball, and America in the Shadow of the Great War*. "Boston becomes the epicenter of a second wave, which was a more virulent strain of the virus."

Despite the Red Sox being on their way to winning the series—the last they would win before an infamous dry spell that lasted until 2004—the flu reduced attendance at a Fenway Park that already had plenty of empty seats because of World War I. The stadium could hold 35,000 people, but for Game 5 of the Series, only 24,694 fans were in the stands. With flu cases mounting, the next day a Boston public health official warned Bostonians they should be wary of the virus. For Game 6, when the Red Sox clinched the title, only 15,238 showed up. Overall, the war and the pandemic slashed MLB game attendance by over half from what it was in the previous season.

By 1919, the war and the pandemic were over, and a tidal wave of baseball fans swelled into stadiums. Game attendance more than doubled—from 2,830,613 in 1918 to 6,532,439 in 1919. It's a classic example of what economists call "pent-up demand." After being deprived of being able to do something, when the constraints are lifted—whether because of the end of a recession, a war or a pandemic—people ravenously consume what was previously out of reach.

Now with light beginning to show at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel, the words "pent-up demand" are echoing throughout the business world. The CEO of JetBlue says pent-up demand for travel will help his company soar back to prof-

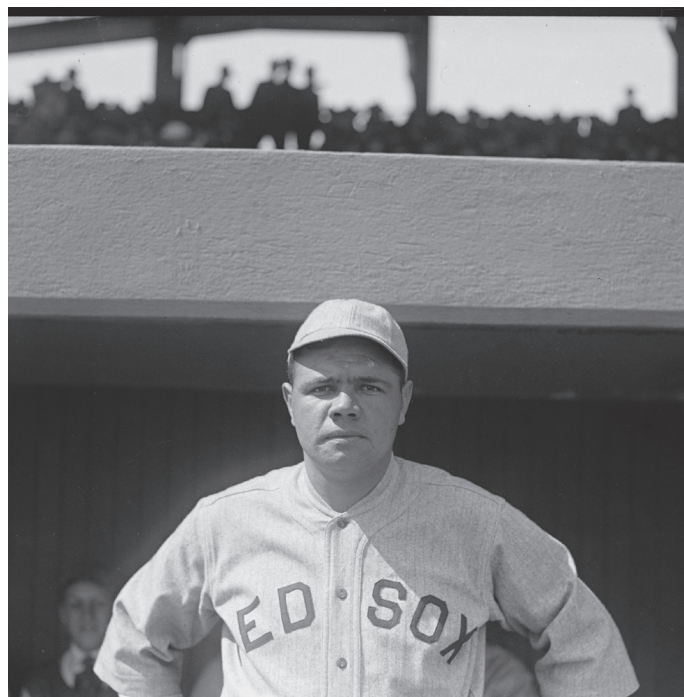


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Babe Ruth, a pitcher for the Boston Red Sox, in 1918. That year, World War I and the Spanish flu pandemic slashed MLB game attendance by over half from what it was in the previous season.

itability. Executives at Marriott claim people will come rushing back to the company's hotel rooms. According to a recent analysis by AlphaSense, a company that uses artificial intelligence technology to sift through Securities and Exchange Commission filings, event transcripts and other business documents, use of the term "pent-up demand" is at an all-time high.

Executives in industries devastated by COVID-19 clearly want investors to believe that they're on the verge of a roaring comeback. And some evidence suggests they may be right. According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the national savings rate has jumped during the pandemic,

Continued on page 42



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Death by avian botulism is gruesome. Poisoned birds lose their ability to walk, then to control their wings. Unable to hold up their heads, poisoned ducks often drown in the water that should have given them life.

A Predictable Tragedy: Avian Botulism in the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges

The Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges are echoing with sound now: the honks of geese, the quacks of mallards, the whistling of wigeon, the bugling of cranes. March is peak migration time, and the abundance of waterfowl is a heart-lifting spectacle.

Sadly, it is not always so. Last summer, a strange silence gripped the Basin. A dead silence. The 90,000 acres of marshes and open water that make up the Lower Klamath and Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuges are a small remnant of vast wetlands that once filled this region on the Oregon-California border. With over 75% of the original wetlands now converted to agriculture, these refuges are a precious oasis for nesting waterfowl and other marsh birds like White-faced Ibis, Black-necked Stilts, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. For this oasis to burst with life, it simply needs water. Sadly, nothing is simple about water in the Klamath Basin. And this summer, that led to tragedy.

All the water in the Klamath Basin is promised to somebody - and almost every year, far more water is promised than is available. The biggest promises are made to agricultural irrigators and to the preservation of three species of endangered fish - two Klamath Lake suckers upstream of the refuges, and coho salmon downstream in the Klamath River. Even though the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge was America's first waterfowl refuge—established in 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt—it comes last on the water distribution list. So, every year, much of the “protected” wetlands turn to mud.

In 2020, the situation was so dire that Bureau of Reclamation, which controls the water, released three emergency allocations to the refuges, totaling 14,000 acre-feet. It was not enough - and compared to the 147,000 acre-feet received by irrigators, barely a drop in the bucket.

The resulting shallow, stagnant pools provided the perfect breeding ground for a bacterium called *Clostridium botulinum*. This bacteria produces a botulism toxin deadly to birds (but harmless to humans). The toxin is taken up by aquatic invertebrates as they filter-feed on the bacteria, and then reaches fatal concentrations in waterfowl and other birds that eat the invertebrates. The dead birds pile up and attract swarms of flies, whose maggots ingest the toxin and become yet another vector for the disease as they are eaten in turn.

Death by avian botulism is gruesome. Poisoned birds lose their ability to walk, then to control their wings. Unable to hold



PHOTO CREDIT: BIRD ALLY X



PHOTO CREDIT: BIRD ALLY X

A Northern Pintail is released following successful treatment at the “Duck Hospital” run by Bird Ally X.

TOP: Mallards and Northern Pintails undergoing rehabilitation at the “Duck Hospital” run by Bird Ally X.

up their heads, poisoned ducks often drown in the water that should have given them life.

Outbreaks of avian botulism are all too frequent in the Klamath Basin's refuges in late summer, when the water is lowest and the temperatures hottest. That is also the time when ducks molt their flight feathers, temporarily losing their ability to escape an outbreak by flying away. In a “normal” year, a few hundred birds may be brought in for treatment. This summer, the outbreak was a conflagration.

It began a full month earlier than usual, and continued far longer, into mid-October. The first afflicted bird was brought in for rehabilitation on July 17, but wildfires in the region restricted the initial response, giving time for the disease to spread unchecked. Search and collection wasn't in full force until ear-



PHOTO CREDIT: CALIFORNIA WATERFOWL ASSOCIATION

Caroline Brady, California Waterfowl Association Supervisory Biologist, with duck carcasses collected at Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge, August 1, 2020.

ly August, when the number of birds coming in to the “Duck Hospital” skyrocketed to an average of 75 birds a day, with a one-day record of 167 birds. The rehabilitation organizations Bird Ally X and Focus Wildlife were soon caring for hundreds of ducks and shorebirds, with birds released on a daily basis to make room for the new ones arriving each afternoon.

In total, more than 3,000 afflicted birds were brought for rehabilitation. The birds that made it to treatment were the lucky ones. Among birds that survived the first 24 hours, over 80% recovered and could be released. The tireless work of volunteers, the support of community and conservation organizations, and the expertise of rehabilitation staff were awe-inspiring, especially against the backdrop of the COVID pandemic and the horrific wildfire season in the region.

But sadly, only a small fraction of the poisoned birds made it to treatment. Field surveyors at the refuge gathered the bodies of about 20,000 dead birds, a number equivalent to the population of Klamath Falls, the region’s largest city. The California Waterfowl Association, whose staff assisted with collection of poisoned birds and carcasses, estimates that at least 60,000 birds died.

So—at least 60,000 dead birds. Dead Mallards, with their emerald-green heads. Dead Northern Pintails, long-necked, long-tailed, and elegant. Dead Northern Shovelers, with their comically enormous bills. Delicate little Green-winged Teal and brawny Canada Geese—dead. And waterfowl were not the only victims. Bird Ally X treated over 35 bird species poisoned by botulism, including Northern Harriers, Virginia Rails, Forster’s Terns, and American Avocets.

The struggles for water in the Klamath Basin date back decades, and are as intractable as any in the West, even leading to armed confrontation between irrigators and federal employees in 2001. The most determined recent effort at a compromise



PHOTO CREDIT: BIRD ALLY X

Northern Pintail poisoned with botulism as brought in for treatment.

solution, called the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement, expired in 2015 because Congress failed to ratify it.

A host of seemingly legitimate claims on the Klamath Basin’s water exist: farmers whose roots in the region go back generations; Upper Klamath tribes whose ties to the lake suckers stretch back to time immemorial, and Klamath River tribes whose bonds to the salmon are equally ancient.

But older than any human claim, any human “right,” are the rights of the wild. The rights of lake suckers, who evolved right here in the Klamath Basin, and are found nowhere else on earth. The rights of salmon, whose life journey from freshwater to ocean and back to spawn and die in the stream of their birth is an epic beyond our imagination. And the rights of marsh birds to have a place, a place of abundance and safety in this dry and dusty world, to live their lives.

How easily we forget that water is wild. We claim it, we fight over it, but we did not make it. The water of the Klamath Basin created a world of overflowing abundance, of lakes filled with suckers, a great river bursting with salmon, and also of marshlands filled with ducks and grebes and ibis and egrets. Our use, our heedless overuse, has almost destroyed that world.

There are glimmers of hope. The dams that choke the Klamath River may be finally nearing removal, to the great benefit of salmon. Over \$6 million was recently made available to the wildlife refuges to lease additional water. But the comprehensive plan needed to assure a supply of water sufficient to prevent a recurrence of 2020’s botulism tragedy remains elusive.

In my mind’s eye, I see the 60,000 dead birds gathered in a great poisoned pile, a pyramid of lost lives. The bodies are perfect and unmarked. The feathers are still beautiful. If the masters of the Klamath Basin’s water, all the contending parties, could be brought to stand before that awful sight, would they, I wonder, fall silent for a moment? Would their dusty hearts soften? Can we, at least, agree that this must never happen again?



Pepper Trail is an ornithologist and the conservation co-chair of the Rogue Valley Audubon Society.

JES BURNS

Northwest Scientists Answer Questions About How COVID-19 Affects The Brain

Scientists in Oregon and Washington may have solved one mystery at the root of some of the more puzzling symptoms of COVID-19. They've shown that small pieces of coronavirus can cross into the brain in a similar way that HIV does in its victims.

This discovery could help explain why some people sick with COVID-19 experience long-lasting brain fog and fatigue, among other symptoms related to the central nervous system.

When magnified, coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) looks like a ball with little spiky nodes all over the surface. Those spikes are made of proteins often referred to as the "S1 protein," after one of the important components of the spike responsible for grabbing ahold of human cells. This the first step the coronavirus takes to harness healthy cells to make copies of itself and spread throughout the body.

The researchers from the University of Washington School of Medicine and Oregon Health & Science University used lab mice to test if those S1 proteins could actually cross from the bloodstream into the brain itself.

"Everything about the brain is special, including the blood vessels. They're specially modified so they usually keep things out of the brain," said UW Medicine's Bill Banks, who works at the Seattle Veterans Affairs Medical Center. "Every once in a while, there's something like a virus or bacteria or parasite that figures out how to trick its way (through) the blood-brain barrier to get in."

From their previous research the scientists knew a protein associated with the HIV virus could do this, and now they're the first to show coronavirus S1 protein can do the same.

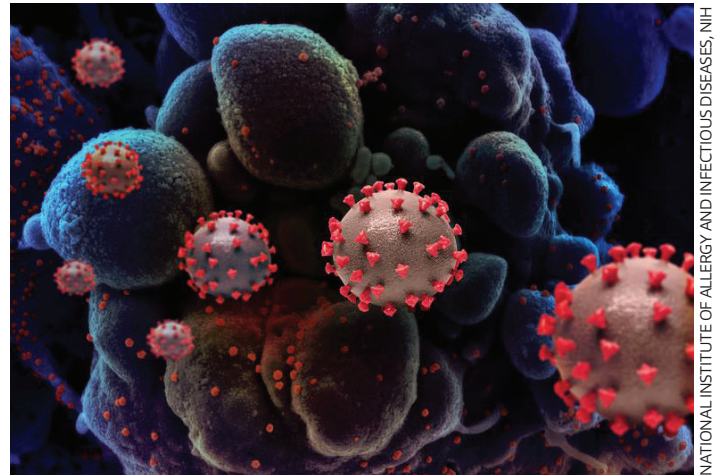
"The viral protein can get in. That means that probably the viral protein is causing problems once it does get in. And it also means that probably the virus could get in a well," he said.

The researchers also found that the S1 protein enters the brain about 10 times quicker through the blood as it does through the olfactory nerve in the nose.

This new understanding of how coronavirus works provides insight into why some people experience brain-related symptoms after becoming infected.

"This study suggests that S1 in mice definitely can enter the brain and could cause immune-related problems, inflammation," said Jacob Raber, a neuroscientist at OHSU. "It's important to know because when you know how it works, you can start trying to treat it."

Neurologist Jennifer Frontera with NYU School of Medicine, who was not involved in the research, says there's a lot



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The red spikes on coronaviruses are where S1 proteins are found.

of interest right now in figuring out how COVID-19 affects the brain. Focusing on how the S1 protein works only begins to answer those questions.

"I think most people are interested in what the actual virus might do if it were to cross the blood-brain barrier," she said.

Frontera says it's still too early to attribute long term neurological symptoms of COVID-19 to the presence of coronavirus or its S1 protein in the brain.

But if the inference of the paper authors are correct, and the spike protein can cause inflammation in the brain, then some of what doctors are seeing in their patients starts to make sense.

"When there is inflammation in the brain, we think about short and long term effects," OHSU's Raber said. "We're concerned that the S1 protein in the brain might cause long term consequences and therefore have chronic effects as well."

The research was also able to show a possible genetic explanation for why men and women experience different susceptibility to coronavirus. Raber says their next step is to look at whether men, who as a group experience more severe symptoms of COVID-19, are more likely to experience the neurological effects of the disease.

The research was published in December 2020, in the journal *Nature Neuroscience*.



Jes Burns is a reporter for OPB's Science & Environment unit. Jes has a degree in English literature from Duke University and a master's degree from the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communications.



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PETER FAIRLEY

Getting to Zero: Decarbonizing Cascadia is a year-long project by nonprofit news organizations in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia. Led by Seattle-based InvestigateWest, the project also will include contributions from The Tyee in Vancouver, British Columbia; national news site Grist.org; Crosscut.com in Washington; and Jefferson Public Radio in Oregon. More details can be found at www.invw.org/getting-to-zero/

Broken Promises: Cascadia Region Not On Track To Cut Carbon Emissions

To the rest of the world, the United States' Pacific Northwest and Canada's British Columbia represent one of the supposedly most eco-friendly regions in North America, if not the globe.

And yet on climate change, the biggest environmental challenge of this generation, the governments of Washington, Oregon and British Columbia not only over-promised what they would do to stem the tide, they actually underperformed compared to all the other states and provinces in the two countries, according to a new analysis by InvestigateWest.

More than a decade ago, the three governments set some of North America's first mandates to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And if any place on earth can show the world how to confront the climate crisis, it should be this region, also known as "Cascadia" after the mountain chain shared by the two countries. Cascadia's abundant hydropower provides a head start toward living without fossil fuels, and the majority of voters in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon say they want to make that transition.

Yet Washington, British Columbia and Oregon were not on track to meet their 2020 targets. In fact, until COVID-19 hit last year, emissions were rising. Between 2013 and 2018, the most recent five-year period for which Cascadia's governments have completed counts, emissions rose by about 5, 6 and 7% in Washington, Oregon and British Columbia, respectively, according to InvestigateWest's analysis, which enabled apples-to-apples comparisons primarily by counting emissions associated with power imports in British Columbia.

"Emissions don't lie and the emissions keep rising," said Andrea Rodgers, an environmental attorney involved in litigation brought by youths in the states and British Columbia charging Oregon, Washington, and Canada with dereliction of duty in failing to live up to their promises to reduce climate-warming emissions.

Cascadia's broken promise

Technologically speaking, climate change is neither insurmountable nor unaffordable. It's the politics that have fallen short, according to experts and activists interviewed by InvestigateWest.

"I wouldn't say we've done nothing. But there's been an awful lot of dithering. We were supposed to do a whole hell of a lot better," says KC Golden, who spent over a decade at Seattle-based think tank Climate Solutions and now serves on the board of international activist group 350.org.

The region's fight to head off climate change has been beset by partisan wrangling, fear of job losses, disagreements over how to ensure equity for already polluted and marginalized communities, and misinformation obscuring the full potential of well-documented solutions.

"The constraining factor has always been political feasibility, not economic feasibility," says political economist and energy modeling expert Mark Jaccard, a professor at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British

Columbia, and a former chair of the British Columbia Utilities Commission.

The story of Cascadia's decade of policy delay and emissions backsliding is a story of ambitious goals eroded by inertia. It's a story of overestimating faith in economic logic and underestimating the enduring allure of economic growth. And, south of the 49th Parallel, it's a tale of a bipartisan consensus split asunder, such that fighting for a cleaner future is seen, in some quarters, as an attack on freedom. Or worse.

Powering down coal

After 2005's Hurricane Katrina and 2007's record-breaking loss of Arctic sea ice, Cascadia lawmakers acted, mandating emissions reductions by 2020 and steeper cuts by 2050. As of

Technologically speaking, climate change is neither insurmountable nor unaffordable. It's the politics that have fallen short, according to experts and activists interviewed by InvestigateWest.

Getting To Zero

Continued from page 17

2008, Washington, British Columbia and Oregon were among only four provinces and eight states to legally commit to decarbonization.

Oregon and British Columbia set ambitious long-term goals of 75-77% reductions from their 1990 emissions, reflecting the global carbon cuts scientists believed were needed by mid-century to avert the worst of the impending climate disaster. Washington state came in with a relatively modest 50%-by-2050 goal.

All three governments chalked up quick wins in their power sectors.

British Columbia immediately scrapped plans for a new gas-fired power plant and two coal generators. Washington voters and Oregon's Legislature passed some of North America's first requirements mandating privately-owned utilities to add a rising share of wind, solar and other types of renewable power to their hydropower-rich energy portfolios.

This quick action unleashed a boom in wind power development, especially along the Columbia River Gorge, the natural wind tunnel that separates Oregon and Washington.

And guess what? It actually saved consumers money. Falling prices for wind and solar, driven by innovation and scale made the mandates more economical.

Cascadia's problem was the rest of its economy. Buildings, industry and especially transportation generate over two-

thirds of Cascadia's emissions. Carbon-cutting options for those – such as electric heat pumps to replace gas furnaces and urban redesigns to reduce vehicle travel – were more complex and costly than swapping out coal smokestacks for wind turbines. And none of Cascadia's governments had policies strong enough to forcefully drive those options into use.

Greenhouse gas emissions fell for several years thanks to cleaner electricity, as well as the global financial crisis of 2008. People traveled less, consumed less and produced less. Fossil fuel use dropped. Cascadia's emissions fell by 8%. Then the economy rebounded. People moved more. Production and consumption rose. And climate-warming emissions came roaring back.

By 2018 robust economic growth across Cascadia had restored over four-fifths of the 19.5-megatons of annual emissions that the region shed during the downturn.

Surging emissions from cars, trucks, trains and planes led the way. Transportation accounted for nearly two-fifths of Cascadia's emissions by the time its economies rebounded from the global economic meltdown in 2012. Six years later vehicle emissions had ballooned by over 10% in Washington and Oregon and 29% in British Columbia.

While some say increasing emissions are a price of economic growth, InvestigateWest's analysis puts the blame squarely

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on Cascadia's weak decarbonization policies. Political backlash and game-playing blocked measures to guide economic growth toward green technologies and strategies, and Cascadia's economies kept growing along the path of least resistance. In a world awash in cheap fossil fuels, that meant more carbon emissions.

Not so in California, where climate policy moved forward, and emissions from transportation grew at less than half the rate in Cascadia.

Between full economic recovery in 2012 and 2018, the most recent reporting year, California and Cascadia both booked a robust 26% increase in GDP. Over that period California drove its annual emissions down by more than 5%. Washington's emissions – and Cascadia's as a whole – ballooned by over 7%.

Tracking Arnold

California “decoupled” economic growth from rising carbon via a raft of laws and policies that encouraged or mandated the use of efficient products and cleaner energy. Many were legislated in 2006 under then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, including the centerpiece: a system known as cap and trade. It set a cap on carbon emissions that declined annually and enforced that cap by requiring polluters to buy credits – sold at auction – for every ton of carbon they released. By putting a price on carbon, cap and trade created a financial incentive to reduce pollution.

Cascadia's governments all sought to match the breadth of California's carbon-cutting policies. They failed.

Early efforts in Washington and Oregon to enact cap-and-trade schemes fizzled. Washington approved a bill in 2008 that was later deemed unenforceable. Oregon ran out of time when the global economic meltdown struck that year.

British Columbia, in contrast, raced ahead. Like Schwarzenegger, then-Premier Gordon Campbell was a center-right politician who embraced climate action. British Columbia's parliamentary government, with its fewer checks on power than the U.S. system, enabled him to move fast.

By the end of 2007, Campbell had a climate package in place. And in May 2008 his Liberal Party government formally approved North America's first carbon tax. It took effect that July – five years before California's system went into effect.

The tax was set to increase annually. Within a few years economists were reporting small benefits and a reassuring lack of harms. The tax had trimmed fuel consumption in British Columbia compared to other provinces in Canada while stimulating British Columbia's economy. British Columbia used its tax take to lower-income and business taxes, and sent rebate checks to protect lower-income residents from rising energy costs. Other measures protected energy-intensive, trade-exposed industries such as cement producers.

But in 2011 – after the rival New Democratic Party ran an “Axe the Tax” platform alleging that the carbon tax hurt working families – Campbell's party dumped him for a more populist leader. Premier Christy Clark took her lead from British Columbia's business lobbies. She froze the carbon tax, rolled back funding for other climate measures, and rolled out a sales pitch for LNG investment.

Despite its early policy lead, British Columbia's decarbonization results proved worse than underwhelming. Instead of declining versus 2007, emissions rose through 2018.

The price of partisanship

To the south, high hopes similarly tanked because of politics. Washington and Oregon governors returned to carbon pricing with their eyes on California's cap-and-trade program rather than the political bloodbath up north. Alas, the same political crossfire leveled at British Columbia's tax – along with some novel attacks – would doom their carbon trading schemes in the state legislatures.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee pushed carbon pricing after he became governor in 2013, in spite of Republican control of the state senate, where Sen. Doug Ericksen, an opponent of climate action whose district includes two refineries, chaired the environment committee.

Inslee tried several times, and voters rejected two ballot measures before Washington took a year off from carbon pricing battles in 2019.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown led repeated charges over the same ground after she took office in 2015. Republican pushback there led to the strange events of June 2019, when Oregon state senators exited the capitol in Salem, denying Democrats the quorum they needed to outvote the Republicans.

The senators' run from lawmaking – a ruse they reprised last year – capped years of political dissolution that transformed an earlier consensus on climate action into open political warfare. In 2007, Oregon's package of climate bills passed on bipartisan votes. In 2020 not one Republican cast a vote on a cap-and-trade measure backed by the state's utilities.

Lower-income voters in Oregon and Washington understandably worry about new taxes and higher energy costs. Regressive tax systems in both states mean the lowest 20% of earners already pay the highest proportion of their income in taxes. Some unions paint carbon pricing as a job killer, in spite of contrary evidence from British Columbia and California. Climate justice groups attack industries' ability to buy rights to continue polluting the often minority, low-income communities nearby.

And then there's the influence of corporations that sell fossil fuels or profit most when they are cheap.

Former Oregon legislator Jackie Dingfelder, who led passage of the 2007 climate bills, sees Oregon's vulnerability to ideology and misinformation as a legacy of decline in Cascadia's long-standing forestry and mining industries. As well-paid resource jobs evaporated, some states such as California and Washington pivoted faster, investing in universities that then spun off new job creators such as Microsoft and Amazon.

“We were the poor stepchild,” she said. “A lot of people got left behind.”

Peter Fairly is senior editor for energy and climate at InvestigateWest. Based in Vancouver Island and San Francisco, he covers stories about the environment, including his examination of Cross-Laminated Timber for InvestigateWest. He has won a Society of Environmental Journalists' award for Outstanding Beat Reporting. His byline appears regularly in diverse print and online publications, including *Scientific American*, *New Scientist*, *Hakai Magazine*, *IEEE Spectrum* and *Nature*.



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SAM KESLER

The Blind Spot In The Great American Protest Song

Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land" has long been offered as an "alternative national anthem," performed by musicians from Bruce Springsteen and Pete Seeger to Chicano Batman and Sharon Jones. Its message seems fairly simple — we are all equally entitled to the rights of this country, including the land we stand on. But Native Americans will just as soon point out that the core of the song, that "this land was made for you and me," is a wholly colonialist message.

Ever since Jennifer Lopez performed the iconic folk tune within a medley at President Biden's inauguration, alongside "America the Beautiful" and her own "Let's Get Loud," the song's relevance and inclusivity has been called into question, especially as we enter into a new administration that seeks to unite a divided country.

"I think it was disappointing," says Rebecca Nagle, host of the *This Land* podcast and member of Cherokee Nation, about the song's inclusion. "I mostly experienced the Inauguration on Twitter. It was like I was living in two worlds, where my non-Native Twitter was talking about how great J.Lo is — and she is — and then Native Twitter was like, 'Seriously? "This Land Is Your Land" is how we're gonna celebrate today?"

Although the song is often recognized as a patriotic anthem, Native Americans argue that the song plays into America's continual erasure of Indigenous peoples in culture.

Although the song is often recognized as a patriotic anthem, Native Americans argue that the song plays into America's continual erasure of Indigenous peoples in culture. Many pointed out that America rests on stolen land, while others called it "tone deaf" for such a ceremony. This is not a new issue: Cree musician Buffy Sainte-Marie refused to perform the song with Pete Seeger in 1966, telling the *Village Voice* in 2017, "I just cried through it. I thought, 'This used to be my land and you guys aren't even smart enough to be sensitive to this?'"

Mali Obomsawin, an Ojibwe First Nation activist and musician with the band Lula Wiles, agrees. "In the time that we're in, I think that a lot of people are trying to



Woody Guthrie, 1943

break through the bubble of white ignorance," she says. "I think having J.Lo sing a song that is supposed to unite all Americans — except for Natives of course — is really just in line with that performative social justice that the government and people higher up in the American system are being called to address."

Obomsawin has previously broached her issues with the song in an essay for *Smithsonian Folklife*, which deconstructed the song's origins as a socialist protest anthem, and provides the background of American conquest to the song's different interpretations.

"In the context of America," she writes, "a nation-state built by settler colonialism, Woody Guthrie's protest anthem exempli-

Continued on page 23



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fies the particular blind spot that Americans have in regard to Natives: American patriotism erases us, even if it comes in the form of a leftist protest song. Why? Because this land ‘was’ our land.”

Guthrie himself was not entirely ignorant of Native Americans or their struggles – his song “Oklahoma Hills” makes note of the Osage Nation and previously included lyrics listing other tribal nations, which were later cut when it was adapted by his brother Jack. He wrote in an unpublished poem, “My blood beats Spanish and my breath burns Indian and my soul boils negro,” and he also said in a 1949 performance, “They used every kind of a trick to get these Indians to sign over their lands.”

It is likely that Guthrie did not intend the song to either be wholly patriotic nor wholly colonialist. Rather, the song was likely meant as a message of unity for the common American. What his lyrics do tell, instead, is that his message was more tone deaf than anything, especially when read in the 21st century at a massive public event like the inauguration.

“As a country, we’re sort of telling ourselves the story of who we are,” says Nagle. “In that ceremony, we’re telling the story of what our history is, who we are today, and where we’re going. And when you leave Indigenous people out of that story, that’s how anti-Indigenous racism functions, is through erasure.”

The song has to be considered within the context of how it is presented, Obomsawin also argues – in this case, during a ceremony that included very little recognition of Native Americans at all. In different iterations of the song, we are oftentimes lent a new perspective. Guthrie’s original recording was in response to Irving Berlin’s “God Bless America,” for example. Others sing it to remind Americans of the diverse cultural backgrounds of its citizens. White musicians like Pete Seeger and Dave Matthews have even added in Indigenous-minded verses that put the original’s in stark relief.

“This land is your land,” goes one verse written by activist Carolyn “Cappy” Israel, which Seeger often performed, “but it once was my land / Before we sold you Manhattan Island / You pushed our nations to the reservation / This land was stole by you from me.”

Likewise, some of this country’s best anthems are those that offer a critique of what it stands for – songs like Springsteen’s “Born in the U.S.A.” and Childish Gambino’s modern classic “This Is America.” Springsteen’s song is also one that often gets trotted out for big ceremonies under the guise of hardcore patriotism, but anyone who’s listened to the song will tell you it takes a sharp look at the aftermath of the Vietnam War.

Guthrie intended his song to take a critical stance against this country, in a way that was pretty radical for its time. But he also recognized that this country has a lot of beauty to give, which has been corrupted by private interests. It proves it is possible to offer critique and refuge simultaneously. Maybe that same sensibility can be applied to the song itself – taking the good and bad just the same.

Obomsawin does admit that this song has become a lightning rod for discussion among those who consider the song an essential part of America’s folklore.

“I think because America is such a new country and it has some identity problems,” she says, “there is this obsession with preserving things from the past. And Guthrie is a source of pride for a lot of people, especially activists.

“It just doesn’t really seem that precious to me, as a Native person. It’s really more of a matter of: Is America willing to address the problems that are represented by the blind spot of this song?”

Nagle agrees that, Guthrie’s intended meaning aside, it’s more important to focus on bigger-picture issues facing Native communities. “You know,” says Nagle, “maybe [Guthrie] had good intentions and he wrote a dumb verse that now has taken on a new meaning, but why is that the point? Why is the point not: In this moment of symbolic significance for the United States, why are we going through this ceremony erasing Indigenous people?”

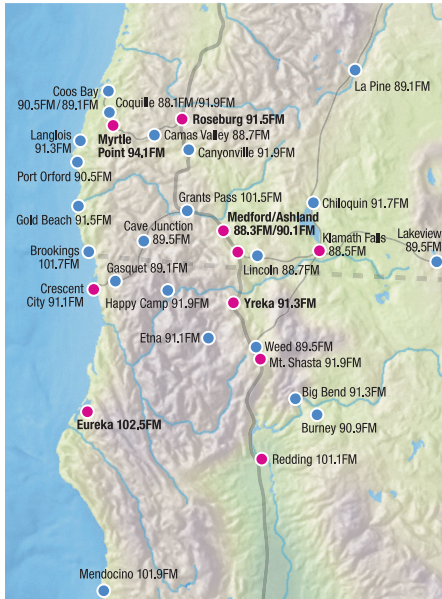
“I don’t care if you think Woody Guthrie is good or bad, I want to live in a country that believes in the rights of Indigenous nations.”

Indigenous citizens are so often left out of the larger conversation that it is no surprise Guthrie’s omission has not had any impact on its ascendancy to anthem status, evidenced even by its entry in NPR’s list of the most important American musical works of the 20th century, which fails to note this issue. “This Land Is Your Land” is not the problem, but that many offer the song without critique may be more telling than the lyrics themselves.

Sam Kesler is a writer, editor, and producer with a passion for broadcast and print media. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a BA in English, Magna Cum Laude and writes for *The Washington Post*, *The Key* from WXPB, *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, NPR, *34th Street Magazine*, and *The Pennsylvania Gazette*.

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by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

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by Gioachino Rossini

March 27 – *Don Giovanni*
by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

April 3 – *Rusalka*
by Antonín Dvořák

April 10 – *La Bohème*
by Giacomo Puccini

April 17 – *From the House of the Dead*
by Leos Janáček

April 24 – *Die Frau Ohne Schatten*
by Richard Strauss



La Bohème by Giacomo Puccini

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- 8:00pm Undercurrents
- 3:00am World Café

Saturday

- 5:00am Weekend Edition
- 9:00am Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me!
- 10:00am Radiolab
- 11:00am Snap Judgement
- 12:00pm E-Town
- 1:00pm Mountain Stage
- 3:00pm Folk Alley
- 5:00pm All Things Considered
- 6:00pm American Rhythm

- 8:00pm Conversations from the World Cafe
- 9:00pm The Retro Lounge
- 10:00pm Late Night Blues
- 12:00am Undercurrents

Sunday

- 5:00am Weekend Edition
- 9:00am TED Radio Hour
- 10:00am This American Life
- 11:00am The Moth Radio Hour
- 12:00pm Jazz Sunday
- 2:00pm American Routes
- 4:00pm Sound Opinions
- 5:00pm All Things Considered
- 6:00pm The Folk Show
- 9:00pm Woodsongs
- 10:00pm The Midnight Special
- 12:00pm Mountain Stage
- 1:00am Undercurrents

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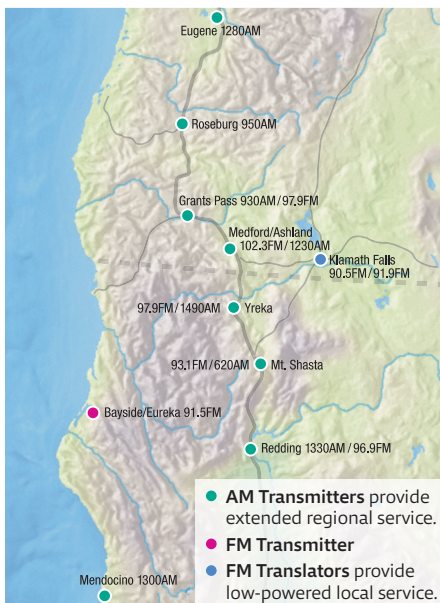
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- 5:00am BBC World Service
- 7:00am 1A
- 8:00am The Jefferson Exchange
- 10:00am The Takeaway
- 11:00am Here & Now
- 1:00pm BBC News Hour
- 1:30pm The Daily
- 2:00pm Think
- 3:00pm Fresh Air
- 4:00pm PRI's The World
- 5:00pm On Point
- 6:00pm 1A
- 7:00pm Fresh Air (repeat)
- 8:00pm The Jefferson Exchange (repeat of 8am broadcast)
- 10:00pm BBC World Service

Saturday

- 5:00am BBC World Service
- 7:00am Inside Europe
- 8:00am Day 6
- 9:00am Freakonomics Radio
- 10:00am Planet Money
- 11:00am Hidden Brain
- 12:00pm Living on Earth
- 1:00pm Science Friday
- 3:00pm To the Best of Our Knowledge
- 5:00pm Politics with Amy Walter
- 6:00pm Selected Shorts
- 7:00pm BBC World Service

Sunday

- 5:00am BBC World Service
- 8:00am On The Media
- 9:00am Innovation Hub
- 10:00am Reveal
- 11:00am This American Life
- 12:00pm TED Radio Hour
- 1:00pm The New Yorker Radio Hour
- 2:00pm Fresh Air Weekend
- 3:00pm Milk Street Radio
- 4:00pm Travel with Rick Steves
- 5:00pm To the Best of Our Knowledge
- 7:00pm BBC World Service

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The simulation hypothesis proposes that our reality could be an advanced computer simulation designed by our ancestors.

The Simulation Is Real, Probably

There is a 50/50 chance that you and I are part of a computer simulation.

Now before you allow the prospect of being an entity inside a computer simulation to unleash an existential crisis that leaves you reeling (albeit simulated “reeling”), let me assure you that it does not matter whether you are the real deal or a simulated peel clinging to the inner fruit of reality.

You exist and your existence is important regardless of whether or not you exist in “base reality”, that is to say, the substrate upon which all other layers of reality would be built upon.

This is not a new concept; it’s an ancient one that permeates religion and philosophy. Much of human existence has been, and continues to be, devoted to the pursuit of traversing and transcending Earthly reality in order to reach “base reality”, or “true truth”, or God.

That we are part of a computer simulation is a relatively new twist on this old concept that was, arguably, first popularized in Plato’s allegory of the cave. In the allegory of the cave, a group of prisoners live their entire lives chained to the wall of a cave. Their only reality being shadows projected onto the blank wall in front of them; these are a result of objects passing in front of a fire located behind them.

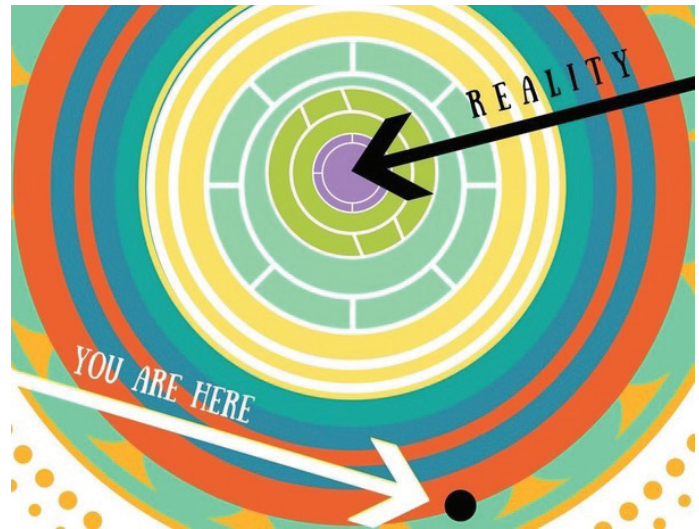
Some 2,400 years after Plato, the movie *The Matrix* (1999) depicted humans as prisoners of an artificial intelligence that kept their minds blissfully plugged into a computer simulation (“the matrix”) while their actual physical bodies were trapped inside of pods designed to harvest their energy output to power the A.I. robots that had taken over the planet. The plot is about humans awakening from “the matrix” to discover the true reality of their existence and wage war against their A.I. overlords.

The Matrix was a hit movie not just because it was well done but because its plot was based upon the age-old question of whether or not the reality we are experiencing is base reality or just an illusion.

The simulation hypothesis proposes that our reality could be an advanced computer simulation designed by our ancestors.

I thought this idea was rather absurd the first time I read about it in philosopher Nick Bostrom’s seminal paper “Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?”, which was published in *Philosophical Quarterly* in 2003. Here is the abstract from that paper:

This paper argues that at least one of the following propositions is true: (1) the human species is very likely



to go extinct before reaching a “posthuman” stage; (2) any posthuman civilization is extremely unlikely to run a significant number of simulations of their evolutionary history (or variations thereof); (3) we are almost certainly living in a computer simulation. It follows that the belief that there is a significant chance that we will one day become posthumans who run ancestor-simulations is false, unless we are currently living in a simulation.

Much debate over the simulation hypothesis has ensued since the publication of Bostrom’s paper. The concept has also been covered in the mainstream media due primarily to science and technology celebrities such as Neil deGrasse Tyson and Elon Musk publicly musing and commenting on its likelihood.

Just last year, astronomer David Kipping of Columbia University published a paper entitled “A Bayesian Approach to the Simulation Argument” in the journal *Universe*. Kipping used Bayesian analysis to calculate the odds that we are in a simulation, concluding that the probability that we are living in base reality is almost the same as the probability that we are a simulation—with odds currently tipping slightly in favor of base reality.

I’ve gone from thinking the simulation hypothesis was absurd to a sort of “warm skepticism” that has been informed by my own observations of technological advancements that have occurred during my lifetime.



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Inside The Box

Continued from page 27

I was born in 1969, the year the first iteration of the Internet (ARPANET) was invented. Today, the Internet has grown from four intermittently connected computers at U.S. universities to an estimated 30 billion computing devices globally.

In 1979, I played the video game *Pong* on an Atari console for the first time. *Pong* consisted of a square block moved up and down with a joystick to hit a dot that moved back and forth across the screen. Today, we have 3D photorealistic virtual reality games that are so fully immersive that they can actually frighten the people playing them.

In 1989, Tim Berners-Lee, a computer scientist working at CERN (an acronym derived from the French "Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire," or European Council for Nuclear Research) invented the World Wide Web so that researchers could publish, link, and share information. Today, the World Wide Web has more than 6 billion websites and Google's search index contains trillions of webpages.

In 1999, the world's fastest supercomputer was the Intel ASCI Red/9632, which had a peak speed of 2.3796 TFLOPS. A "FLOP" is the number of floating-point operations per second a computer can perform. A TFLOP or "teraflop" denotes measurement in the trillions. Today's latest model of the iPhone that millions carry around in their pockets has a peak speed of 11 TFLOPS.

In 2009, the first chip-scale quantum computer was developed. Today, the world's fastest quantum computer performs calculations at 100 trillion times the speed of classical supercomputers.

That's just the past 50 years.

At our current exponential rate of technological development, it is conceivable that we will develop quantum computers capable of fully simulating physical worlds sometime during my lifetime.

Those simulated worlds will eventually become populated with advanced artificially intelligent machine-learning agents making autonomous decisions to do this or that in order to build and advance their world—so much so that one could say they are "conscious" and have "freewill".

Perhaps one day, one of those agents will evolve to contemplate its own existence and wonder whether it is existing in "base reality" or in a simulation, perhaps calculating that there's a 50/50 chance.



Scott Dewing is a technologist, writer, and educator. He lives in the State of Jefferson.

Suddenly, after so many years in the theatre, Michael found himself looking for other employment, ultimately working in customer services in a grocery store.

It wants a twelvemonth and a day, And then 'twill end ...That's too long for a play. (*Love's Labour's Lost*)

The words of Shakespeare have a habit of ringing true, and, whilst it is a fact that a year and a day is too long for a play, it's also too long to be without a play. By the time you read this column, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the largest professional theatre company in our region (and one of the largest in the country) will have been closed for more than a year. Some theatre has continued when permitted by the authorities by such local groups as the Rogue Theater Company with their excellent outdoor performances, the Randall, the Oregon Cabaret Theatre (OCT), and the Collaborative Theatre Project (CTP). As I write, I am heartened to learn that the Randall is planning a bold new move into new premises in Medford, specifically, the former home of Howie's at 115 E Main Street. If there is other work by other groups which I have missed, I apologise, and hope you'll forgive me. Nevertheless, and despite all this, the closure of most live theatre has left a huge gap.

To get a sense of the impact of this closure, I spoke a few weeks ago to Michael Jenkinson, an actor, choreographer and director with several decades of professional experience, and asked him to reflect on the 'lost year'. Having trained at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, Michael is no stranger to the Rogue Valley, and has been connected with OCT for many years, most recently as director of *9 to 5* in 2016, and of *Sweeney Todd* in 2019. In early 2020 he was relaxing in Ashland, having just finished directing *Kiss Me Kate* for Inter-mountain Opera in Bozeman. He planned on taking some time off before joining the Texas Shakespeare Festival to direct three plays, but suddenly discovered that the season there was halted. In total, Michael lost eight contracts in 2020.

Suddenly, after so many years in the theatre, Michael found himself looking for other employment, ultimately working in customer services in a grocery store. He found that he brought transferable skills from his work as a director, in terms of leadership and in being able to engage empathetically with other people. Perhaps most importantly, he proved to himself that he could survive without theatre, even though he continues to recognise theatre as his "livelihood"—not just a way of making money, but a way of life.



CREDIT: LUCAS BLAIR PHOTOGRAPHY

Michael Jenkinson

In 2020, with restrictions on the size of theatre audiences, Michael directed smaller productions, including Valerie Rachele's one-person Rosemary Clooney show at OCT, and three plays at Medford's CTP: readings of *I Hate Hamlet* and *Harvey*, and a filmed staging of *One Christmas Carol*, screened online at the end of the year. Those latter projects were Michael's first experience of working with casts who were not all professional actors, but, as he told me, it didn't feel very different from his previous work. He might occasionally have to explain a technical term with which a member of the cast was unfamiliar, but he was impressed by the wealth of talent in the Valley, by

Theatre

Continued from page 29

the number of people with a hunger to create theatre, and by their commitment to professionalism. He also appreciated the change in his life: for the first time, he had to fit in his theatre work around his paid employment, with the danger that theatre might become a hobby rather than a life—a challenge faced by many of us all of the time.

More surprising, however, was what he learned from having to direct under the restrictions imposed by a pandemic. It was obvious that a director wearing a mask might meet difficulties in being understood by his actors, but Michael also came to realise that having the cast in masks during the rehearsal process meant that he was not always able to appreciate the extent of the work they were doing—the nuances of facial expression were lost and even the pronunciation of words was obscured until the masks were finally removed for performance: in those circumstances, sometimes, even the facial appearance of an actor can come as a surprise!

He is also acutely aware of the extra care which a director now needs to take in ensuring that actors feel comfortable and safe. Before the pandemic, such concerns might surface at times of stage-combat and stage-intimacy, but in the past year, they have become part and parcel of the staging of every scene.

Michael returns to CTP in March to direct *Around the World in 80 Days*—a production which will be performed onstage if circumstances allow, or else filmed for online streaming. Then he's scheduled to direct *The Great American Trailer Park Musical* for OCT, before heading out to the Texas Shakespeare Festival for its planned reopening in the spring of 2021 with his productions of *The Book of Will*, *The Bridges of Madison County* and *The Gnomes of Gnot-a-hill*. Let's hope that those plans come to fruition, and that we shall also see live theatre return to OSF stages very soon, together with further performances by all our local companies, perhaps in new venues and on new platforms.



Geoff Ridden has taught in universities in Africa, Europe and North America. Since moving to Ashland in 2008, he has become a familiar figure on radio, in the theatre, in the lecture hall and on the concert stage. He is artistic director of the Classic Readings Theatre Company and has a particular interest in adaptations of the plays of Shakespeare. Email geoff.ridden@gmail.com



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APRIL EHRLICH

Disaster victim advocates and legal aid attorneys say appealing FEMA's denials is anything but simple; and that by denying so many people the first time, the agency is using a complex bureaucratic process to weed out people who likely need the most help.

FEMA Denied Most Oregonians Seeking Wildfire Disaster Assistance

More than 24,000 Oregonians applied for federal disaster assistance after the catastrophic 2020 wildfires. About 57% of them were denied.

Maria Meunier has lived in Medford for almost a decade. She owned a manufactured home at the Medford Estates – what was once a gated, manicured mobile home park with cleanly paved streets, sturdy homes and bright green lawns – until Sept. 8th. That's when the Almeda Fire raged through Jackson County, destroying 2,500 homes within hours.

Five months after the fire, the crumpled remains of Meunier's house overlooks an expanse of ashes and twisted metal. She and her adult son, who has disabilities, are living at a friend's house as they search for housing amid a tight market and a severe shortage of affordable homes.

They applied for disaster assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, but were denied.

"You are not eligible for housing assistance because you did not prove you lived in the damaged home at the time of the disaster," Meunier reads from the letter FEMA sent her. "I've been there since August 2012! Who's been paying the rent? Who's been paying mortgage and property taxes?"

Meunier is among the nearly 14,000 Oregonians who were denied federal disaster assistance after last year's wildfires, according to data provided by the agency. She's also one of the few people who have appealed FEMA's decisions. About 290 people in Oregon appealed FEMA's denials. Only 40 of those were approved. Meunier wasn't among them.

Meunier wants to go back home. She wants to live in the same park, in the same plot, in a similar house. The park is leasing plots on a first-come, first-serve basis, without prioritizing previous tenants. New tenants will need to buy a home among a selection of designs provided by the park, and prices are going to be tens of thousands of dollars more than what Meunier paid nine years ago. She owned her previous home outright. It was easier to afford the monthly mortgage payments along with space rent when her late husband was alive.

Meunier guesses she'll need another \$30,000 to move back to the park. She's not sure what she'll do if she doesn't make up that shortfall. Still, she plans to appeal FEMA's denial a third time.

"I'm going to fight," Meunier says. "Whatever it takes."



CREDIT: APRIL EHRLICH | JPR NEWS

The 2020 Almeda Fire destroyed thousands of mobile homes in Jackson County, including the Royal Oaks Mobile Manor in Phoenix, Oregon.

Left Out

Oregon's high rates of denial are on par with previous natural disasters. FEMA denied about 60 percent of Puerto Rican disaster assistance applicants after Hurricane Maria. A study by Texas Hausers, a housing nonprofit, found that FEMA denied a quarter of disaster applicants after Hurricane Harvey.

Many of the people who have been denied assistance are low-income. Among Hurricane Harvey applicants, people whose annual incomes were below \$15,000 had a 46% denial rate. People with annual incomes exceeding \$70,000 had a 10% denial rate.

JPR has a pending data request with FEMA to obtain income and demographic information about Oregon applicants who were impacted by wildfires in 2020.

Following Oregon's wildfires, FEMA issued press releases encouraging people to appeal. They said the appeals process could be as simple as correcting a typo or providing a missing document.

Disaster victim advocates and legal aid attorneys say appealing FEMA's denials is anything but simple; and that by denying so many people the first time, the agency is using a com-

JPR News Focus: Wildfire

Continued from page 31

plex bureaucratic process to weed out people who likely need the most help.

“People who’ve been affected by a disaster are dealing with trauma,” says attorney Tracy Figueroa with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid. “They’re trying to pull the documents together, and just hearing ‘no’ from one entity or another can shut things down. They don’t know how to navigate the bureaucracy. They’re just done.”

Figueroa and other legal aid attorneys say applicants almost always need an attorney to help them find and deliver documents, provide context for their living situations, and continually follow up with FEMA representatives.

People with limited resources are less likely to have access to a lawyer. Disaster-prone states like Texas, where Figueroa has worked through 18 federal disasters, have teams of legal aid attorneys that help low-income disaster victims. But in states like Oregon, which rarely sees a disaster as destructive as the Almeda Fire, there are few private or nonprofit attorneys who are experienced in FEMA disaster assistance.

FEMA’s denial letters aren’t always clear about how applicants can amend their applications. For example, several Oregon applicants told JPR that they were denied assistance because they have homeowner’s insurance; a common misunderstanding, since FEMA often lists homeowners insurance as a reason for denial. Rather, FEMA can help people with homeowners insurance, but those applicants need to follow a few other steps first. They need to see what their insurance will cover and provide that documentation to FEMA, then they need to apply for a loan through the Small Business Administration, even if they don’t intend to take out a loan. At that point, they could go back to FEMA with an appeal.



CREDIT: APRIL EHRUCH | JPR NEWS

Maria Meunier lost her home to the Almeda Fire. She’s been trying to get federal disaster assistance ever since.

Some applicants have also encountered language barriers, including Meunier, who primarily speaks Spanish. When she called the FEMA help line and asked for Spanish services, she received an English-speaking representative who used a translator located at a separate call center. They said they couldn’t transfer her to a Spanish-speaking FEMA representative; instead, they had to use a translator from the call center.

“They don’t realize, in the translation, a lot of things get messed up,” Meunier says. “You cannot literally translate spoken words.”



CREDIT: APRIL EHRUCH | JPR NEWS

An air tanker flies above south Medford to drop fire retardant onto the Almeda Fire as it tore through residential neighborhoods on Sept. 8, 2020.



CREDIT: APRIL EHRLICH/JPR NEWS

People with unconventional living conditions — like mobile homeowners who once lived in the Royal Oaks Mobile Manor — face additional challenges in getting disaster assistance.

Data Denials

When someone applies for disaster assistance through FEMA, the agency feeds their information through a third-party service, according to FEMA's employee manuals.

If someone's information doesn't match up with that service's database, it spits out a denial. People often receive eligibility determinations within hours of submitting their applications.

FEMA's automated data verification can be problematic for people with unconventional living conditions. If someone was informally living out of a garage or a spare bedroom — or living in a mobile home with a title that never formally transferred to their name — they're more likely to get denied assistance. If they have a Spanish name that is sometimes Anglicized or misspelled — or they have two last names that are sometimes hyphenated, sometimes not — they're also more likely to be denied. It could get particularly tricky if a family includes undocumented parents with a child who is a U.S. Citizen.

If there are multiple households living on a property — like roommates sharing a home, or multiple families in different buildings with the same address — only one of them could apply for assistance. If the same address gets multiple applications for assistance, they're more likely to be denied.

These factors tend to leave out historically marginalized people with low incomes, says Sarah Saadian of the Low Income Housing Coalition.

"These programs are not designed to serve people with the greatest needs," Saadian says. "And so, it's unsurprising that we keep seeing these outcomes over and over again."

The most common reason people are denied assistance in their initial applications is because of a clerical error or a missing document, according to FEMA spokesperson Jassiel Olivero

Melo. She wouldn't say if the agency was working on improving its disaster assistance applications to alleviate this common mistake.

"If the agency finds that there may be something in the application process that is causing applicants to fall short or needs some [interpretation], I am very sure the agency will improve it, if that's the particular case," Melo says.

Challenges With Mobile Homes

Jackson County officials say two-thirds of the homes destroyed by the Almeda Fire were manufactured homes. Like Meunier, mobile homeowners face a number of challenges in applying for disaster assistance. They need to provide months-long proof that they paid space rent, a copy of their lease agreement, and a title to their home, which isn't always available because of the generally informal process of buying a mobile home.

"For people who are living in mobile homes, they may not have those title documents," Saadian says. "Even if your state may require you to register it, it just doesn't happen like that. Sometimes the park owner might have it. Sometimes it's never delivered when the home is delivered."

Saadian and the Low Income Housing Coalition are encouraging FEMA and Congress to enact legislation that allows mobile homeowners to self-certify homeownership in lieu of title documents, a process that had been allowed after Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico. FEMA only allows self-attestation in U.S. territories, not in the states.

Mobile home parks have historically been located in areas that are susceptible to natural disasters, including wildfires and hurricanes.

"They're in areas where wildfires occur and where flooding can occur because they're tucked away," says attorney Ilene Jacobs with the California Rural Legal Assistance. "Some of them are quite substandard and are in areas adjacent to a highway."

The Almeda Fire burned through the Bear Creek Greenway, a riparian area and bike path running along the Interstate 5 freeway. Several manufactured home parks abutted the greenway and freeway before the fire raged through those properties.

Jacobs has spent years working closely with disaster assistance groups and legal-aid clients. She says every time there's a disaster, the same patterns arise: high rates of denial, low rates of appeals, and large numbers of low-income families falling through the cracks.

"These are lessons that we should have learned a long time ago and not learn every time there's a disaster," Jacobs says.



April Ehrlich began freelancing for Jefferson Public Radio in 2016. She officially joined the team as *Morning Edition* host and a *Jefferson Exchange* producer in August 2017.

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KIRK SIEGLER

The freed Bundy has been a far-right fixture in the response to the pandemic in the West, leading protests portraying public health restrictions like mask rules as tyranny.

Roots Of U.S. Capitol Insurrectionists Run Through American West

As the violent mob broke into the U.S. Capitol last Wednesday, and livestreams showed pro-Trump insurrectionists defacing property and posing in the House Speaker's chair, here in the West, feelings of shock quickly faded to familiarity.

"There are years of warning signs," said Eric Ward of the Western States Center, which tracks extremism in Oregon and the West.

It was five years ago this month when anti-government militants led an armed siege of a federal wildlife refuge in rural eastern Oregon. Far-right extremists led by Ammon Bundy occupied government buildings, vandalized and defaced property and at one point bulldozed a road across land considered sacred to local Native Americans.

"We will go out of this state and out of this country as free men," proclaimed Bundy to reporters in January of 2016, referring to an attempt to seize control more broadly of US public lands.

Bundy did eventually leave Oregon free, a jury acquitted him late in 2016. Late last month, he posted a video urging his followers to go to Washington on Jan. 6.

"God bless you, drive safe, fly safe, don't wear a mask and stand for freedom," Bundy said.

Extremist group monitors say violent acts like the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol have been incubating in the western U.S. for years. Self-identified "patriots" have stormed government buildings, vandalized property and frequently threatened public employees often with few, if any legal consequences.

A western "ethos"

The freed Bundy has been a far right fixture in the response to the pandemic in the West, leading protests portraying public health restrictions like mask rules as tyranny.

In August, he violently forced his way into the Idaho Capitol, disrupting legislative hearings. His "People's Rights" group followers frequently target the homes of local officials. In December, then-Ada County, Idaho Commissioner Diana Lachiano had to race home from a public health meeting upon learning that protesters were banging on her door where her son was alone. Boise's mayor and police chief canceled the meeting citing safety reasons.

Last week, Lachiano said she'd seen some of the same protesters who were outside her home in social media feeds from



In January 2016, armed militants led by Ammon Bundy, seized the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon in an attempt to control US public lands.

inside the U.S. Capitol. She called their notion of freedom as divorced from responsibility.

"Now we see that nationally, people have adopted this sort of ethos, whether they are aligning with the Proud Boys or the Three Percent [militia]," Lachiano says.

Eric Ward at the Western States Center said the Trump loyalists last week were emboldened after watching recent western uprisings.

NPR News Focus: Politics & Government

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“What we’re seeing now is the anticipated outcome of allowing these groups to practice their insurrection on the streets and rural roads of the western region,” Ward says, noting that many of the scofflaws are now free.

President Trump pardoned the Oregon ranchers who were in prison on arson charges and whose fight with federal land managers inspired the standoff at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. He also just pardoned a Utah legislator convicted on federal charges for leading an off-road vehicle ride through sensitive public land.

“Go get the job done”

And then there’s Cliven Bundy, Ammon’s father, who led an armed standoff near the family’s Nevada ranch in 2014. He walked out of the federal courthouse in Las Vegas a free man after the federal government’s case against him collapsed in January 2018.

“We’re not done with this,” Bundy told reporters at the time.

He continues to graze his cattle on federal land without paying or following any federal environmental laws. After the Capitol insurrection, the rancher posted heaping praise for President Trump on Facebook, who Bundy said pointed his loyalists towards Congress, “and nodded his head to go get the job done.”

“It is a movement that feels that it has received permission to act out its fantasies of political violence,” Ward says.

The movement also enjoys support from some elected Republican leaders in the region. After his return from Washington, D.C., last week, Couy Griffin, a defiant Otero County, New Mexico commissioner, posted a video on Facebook boasting about a future far-right rally in Washington.

“We could have a Second Amendment rally on those same steps, you know, and if we do, it’s gonna be a sad day because there’s going to be blood running out of that building,” Griffin says.

The video has since been taken down. But in others still on the site, Griffin, who founded the group “Cowboys for Trump,” rails against Democratic Party leaders and promises activists will reconvene in D.C. ahead of the inauguration.

“A Joe Biden presidency is something that we can never allow,” he says in one video.

Sagebrush rebels

These aren’t just the sagebrush rebels in cowboy hats as they’re so often cast.

The recent western uprisings drew people from cities around the nation: from Alex Jones and his conspiracy theories to anti-Islamic campaigners to white nationalists.

Back in Boise, Diana Lachiando is worried about far-right extremism further reaching into the mainstream. She lost her bid for reelection to the Ada County Commission in Idaho last fall. Friday was her last day in office.

“I don’t have a lot of patience for the people who all of the sudden, it was a step too far to see some people take over the [U.S.] Capitol,” Lachiando says. “There are politicians who have been coddling those sentiments for years.”

Westerners such as Lachiando drew another parallel as they watched the Capitol insurrectionists post their illegal entry and vandalizing right to their own social media feeds. The Bundys and their followers largely did the same back in 2016.

They streamed videos of themselves sitting at government computers and tampering with public property, ultimately doing millions of dollars in damage and all but prosecuting themselves before their trials.

They’re mostly free men today.



As a correspondent on NPR’s national desk, Kirk Siegler covers the urban-rural divide in America. A beat exploring the intersection between urban and rural life, culture, and politics, Siegler has recently brought listeners and readers to a timber town in Idaho that lost its last sawmill just days before the 2016 election, as well as to small rural towns in Nebraska where police are fighting an influx in recreational marijuana coming from nearby Colorado cities.

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DON KAHLE

Buttigieg's work will roll out with a distinctively Oregonian spin to it.

Oregonians Will Help Buttigieg Get Rolling

"Roots Of U.S. Capitol Insurrectionists Run Through American West" by Kirk Siegler was originally published on npr.org on January 12, 2021.

Pete Buttigieg recently became President Biden's Secretary of Transportation, just 14 days after his 39th birthday. This makes him the youngest transportation secretary ever, but not by much. Former Oregon Governor Neil Goldschmidt was also 39 (plus a few months) when he took over as President Carter's Secretary of Transportation in 1979.

Goldschmidt was midway through his second term as Portland's youngest mayor when Carter added his youth and vision to the presidential cabinet. We don't hear very much about Goldschmidt because of some disastrous personal choices he made during his mayoral years. "Cancel culture" shouldn't prevent us from noting what he accomplished for Portland, for Oregon and for the nation.

Buttigieg should pick Goldschmidt's brain about urban planning.

History has shown that a mayor of a smallish city can develop a national vision for American cities. By every measure available, it's worked. America's urban centers attract talent and create wealth like never before. Goldschmidt deserves some of the credit.

Portland in the 1970s was a dangerous mix of backwater desperation. It had too few bridges, too much crime, and not enough pride. Portland was roughly twice the size of Eugene today when Goldschmidt became mayor in 1973. Like Eugene and most smallish cities — including Buttigieg's South Bend, Ind. — residents cherished their neighborhoods and their quality of life. Downtown safety and economic development mattered less than lawns and neighbors.

Goldschmidt solved that puzzle with transportation. He showed Portland's neighborhood leaders what a light rail system would look like and offered them a bargain. Every part of town would gain a new connection to downtown and would share an investment in its success. Local leaders would have to quiet the NIMBY protesters who opposed change as a knee-jerk reaction.

In return, Goldschmidt promised local leaders what they wanted most. Each neighborhood would retain and deepen its



Pete Buttigieg

CREDIT: GAGE SKIDMORE

own heritage, character and identity. Looking back almost 50 years, Goldschmidt delivered on that promise.

If you feel like you've never quite deciphered Portland, you're not alone. I've spent a lot of time there and I feel the same way. Here's why. Portland isn't a single place. It's a collection of a couple dozen places, knit together by their light rail system.

When Portland residents express pride for their city, probe a bit and it's almost always first and foremost about their neighborhood. Portlanders often identify their neighborhood by the name of its central transit stop.

Goldschmidt pioneered giving residents a new sort of civic pride — one that is centered around and built upon their everyday experiences, while also celebrating the larger area's collective assets. Other cities have since borrowed Portland's playbook.

It's no coincidence that Edward McGlone, formerly Director of Public Affairs at Lane Transit District, has been hired to serve as Buttigieg's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs. McGlone will continue working closely with yet another Oregonian.

Rep. Peter DeFazio, Oregon's longest serving member of Congress, is chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. With help from DeFazio, McGlone and Goldschmidt, Buttigieg's work will roll out with a distinctively Oregonian spin to it.



Don Kahle (fridays@dksez.com) writes a column each Friday for *The Register-Guard* and archives past columns at www.dksez.com.

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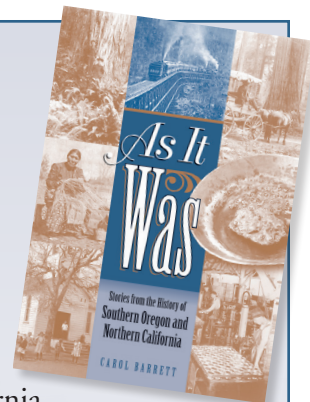
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Did those acts of arson and vandalism invalidate the non-violent dissent of the large majority of those demonstrators?

Choosing The Right Words

As journalists, our currency is words. We understand their power and we strive to wield our words with respect for that power and for the place of responsibility we've been granted in our society. I think it's fair to say that any journalist worthy of the name takes this very seriously. How to do that, however, is far from cut and dried.

One recent example ... When violence broke out at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, news organizations weren't sure how to accurately and fairly label what was happening. Once hundreds of screaming people fought through police lines and smashed their way into the Capitol building, intent on stopping the official count of the Electoral College votes cast in the presidential election, "protesters" no longer seemed adequate. "Rioters" seemed closer to the mark, but most riots are aimlessly destructive, people smashing, looting or burning in frustration and opportunism, but rarely with real focus or purpose. This crew definitely had an agenda.

On a Facebook page for public media journalists, there was an impromptu discussion. What terms were different stations using? Coup? Sedition? Terrorism? At one point, NPR reporter Lulu Garcia-Navarro tweeted that NPR had landed on calling the rioters "pro-Trump extremists" who were engaged in "insurrection." Here at JPR, that seemed to hit the right note.

Another example: Two weeks earlier—and closer to home—JPR news got an angry email from a listener (How angry? The subject line was "Lies, Lies, Lies!"). We had posted online coverage, from Oregon Public Broadcasting, of a protest which had turned violent at the Oregon State Capitol in Salem. The group Patriot Prayer was prominently represented, as were some armed "militia" types.

The legislature was meeting in special session. Several hundred protesters called for ending the state's pandemic restrictions. Dozens forced their way into the Capitol. According to OPB reporters on the scene... "the Oregon State Police declared an unlawful assembly as a growing number of protesters pushed their way through the Capitol doors chanting, 'let us in' and 'arrest Kate Brown.' Police officers donned gas masks as they squared off with protesters, some of whom carried firearms and bear spray, and many of whom were not wearing [face]masks."



Oregon State Police declared an unlawful assembly at the State Capitol Monday as a group of far-right protesters led by Patriot Prayer attempted to gain access on Dec. 21, 2020.

CREDIT: DIRK VANDERHART / OPB

Videos posted to Twitter showed glass doors being smashed, police being sprayed with bear mace and at least two journalists being assaulted.

Our irate listener was at the Capitol in Salem that day. The source of his anger was the headline on the story: Far-Right Protesters Disrupt Oregon Legislature Special Session.

"I was among the peaceful protesters demanding to enter the UNLAWFUL closed session of our legislature this morning," he wrote. "I am not a 'far right protester' as your article explains in this false report!"

He and his compatriots, he explained, were "normal everyday citizens ... really concerned about the avenue our government is taking ... I was, and am, very concerned about the future tenor of these protests if 'we the people' are not listened to by our increasingly tyrannical government."

Since I take the power of words seriously, when someone accuses my newsroom of misusing our words, I take that to heart. Was the "far-right protesters" descriptor inaccurate or unfair, as our listener believed?

As for many of these questions, the answer is neither simple nor clear. Certainly, this was not just a "peaceful protest," as

First, The News

Continued from page 39

our listener claimed. Forcing your way past police officers into the state Capitol is not “peaceful” protest. Spraying police with bear mace is not “peaceful” protest. There is no need to carry firearms during a “peaceful” protest. Pretty much by definition, anything attended by Patriot Prayer is not a “peaceful” protest, because they almost invariably seek out opportunities to brawl with opponents.

Our listener would probably say he himself hadn’t done any of those things, and I’d have no reason to doubt that. And he could correctly point to a number of racial justice protests around the country last summer where some in the crowd had looted and torched businesses. Did those acts of arson and vandalism invalidate the non-violent dissent of the large majority of those demonstrators? I would say not, as did most of those reporting on those events. So, what’s the difference?

Well, one difference is that the violence that occurred at some of the Black Lives Matter protests was committed by offshoots from the main body of demonstrators. At the Oregon Capitol—as at the U.S. Capitol two weeks later—the crowd forcing their way inside was the main event.

But for me, the takeaway is that ascribing motives or viewpoints to large groups of people can be problematic. When you


have well-known far-right groups such as Patriot Prayer or Oath Keepers at a demonstration—especially if they take a prominent part in the event—it’s certainly not incorrect to describe them as far-right. Whether everyone at that demonstration can be accurately tagged with that label is another matter.

So, while I think our angry listener is being a bit disingenuous by being unwilling to concede the overall tenor of the violence in Salem on Dec. 21, the point – that it’s usually more accurate to describe observable actions than to label and ascribe motives—is well taken.

It’s one I’ll keep in mind as we continue to cover events like this going forward, because this type of civil unrest shows no signs of going away anytime soon.



Liam Moriarty has been covering news in the Pacific Northwest for more than 20 years. After a stint as JPR’s News Director from 2002 to 2005, Liam covered the environment in Seattle, then reported on European issues from France. He returned to JPR in 2013 as a regional reporter. Now, Liam is once again News Director, overseeing the expansion of the news department and leading the effort to make JPR the go-to source for news in Southern Oregon and Northern California.



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Most are not inherently nefarious, but by and large, the Western cartographic legacy is built on colonial foundations that can continue to marginalize people and places.

Where Am I?

I am writing this on February 14, 2021, Oregon's 162 birthday. The commemoration of the creation of the beaver state is a good time to reflect on the vast history of the place we now call Oregon. A recent episode of *Underground History* (a regular segment of *The Jefferson Exchange* on JPR's *News & Information Service*) featured a conversation about decolonizing Oregon maps with David Harrelson and Natchee Barnd. Harrelson heads the Cultural Resources Department at the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde while Barnd is with the Ethnic Studies department at Oregon State University. Their work reimagining maps is creating important new cartographic documents that expand our understanding of the history of Oregon.

Maps are powerful tools that humans use to frame the world around them. Many folks using maps today might assume these are neutral documents, helpful in getting us from point A to point B. But all maps have an agenda and are biased in what they depict and omit. These choices can be aesthetic, made to streamline data, or based on the desire to present information in a deliberately cultivated way. Political boundaries placed on

landscapes can present physical spaces in ways that people, places, and even ideas, are erased.

The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde have used anti-colonial mapping techniques to correct mistakes or misrepresentations on existing maps. This award-winning work can be seen in their mapping of tribal treaty areas in Western Oregon. The tribe is also using decolonial methods that can express relationships to space and place in ways outside of Western mapping practices. These Indigenized maps can take many forms and convey important and sophisticated geographical information.

Toponyms, or place names, can also provide important clues to the history of places. In my work, I have often scoured old maps looking for references such as "China Gulch" or "Kanaka Flat" in order to identify locations where minority populations were working or living. Indigenous place names can also provide information about resources and geographic features. These days the Oregon Geographic Names Board is tasked with naming or reconsidering existing place names. There are also

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Ben Johnson and wife Amanda Gardener

PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON BLACK PIONEERS

Planet Money

Continued from page 11

so people may have extra cash to burn on big trips, fancy cocktails and Broadway shows. And, man, do people miss going out.

According to a recent survey by the Harris Poll, 71% of Americans say they miss socializing in restaurants and bars, 61% say they miss shopping in stores and 52% say they miss movie theaters. Growing percentages of people say they're planning on splurging on vacations, clothes, cars and sporting events when things return to normal. Fifty-nine percent say they would take a COVID-19 vaccine in order to fly again. After news broke that COVID-19 vaccines work, stocks for airlines, cruise lines and other industries that rely on being face-to-face surged.

Places that have gotten the virus under control have already seen some impressive rebounds in travel and leisure. For example, in China, domestic airline travel came roaring back after the country ended its shutdowns. When Shanghai Disneyland reopened, tickets sold out in minutes.

When we get the pandemic under control, pent-up demand may even rear its head with more baby heads. For example, studies have found that after the Spanish flu reduced birth-rates, countries like Norway experienced a baby boom once they recovered.

Beyond a resurgence of babies and baseball, researchers have credited the end of the Spanish flu with feeding a "speculative orgy" that helped produce a boom in 1919. Now, financial pundits predict that pent-up demand could feed a bull market this year.

But before you totally get your hopes up, the short boom that followed the Spanish flu ended in a largely forgotten crash in 1920. Only after that did we get the Roaring '20s, with the happy flappers and fedoras and all.

As for Babe Ruth—who apparently got the Spanish flu twice, by the way—he broke an American League record for home runs in a single season in the year that followed the virus. But the Red Sox then traded him to the Yankees. One season delivered a pandemic, and the next the Curse of the Bambino. Ouch.

Since 2018, Greg Rosalsky has been a writer and reporter at NPR's *Planet Money*.

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Underground History

Continued from page 41

ongoing efforts to address racist and offensive names on public lands that might alienate those who would otherwise use them. Recently, a local Applegate landmark was renamed Ben Johnson Mountain. The mountain has long been associated with the African American blacksmith that lived there in the 19th century, and its moniker is now updated to reflect his full name. This is an important step to ensure that African American Heritage is visible in southwestern Oregon and that Mr. Johnson's local legacy is presented with respect and can be shared with modern residents.

As we move around in the place we now call Oregon, take a moment to think about the ways in which we define the space around us. Recent memes on social media "map" new COVID-era commutes from the bedroom to the kitchen, all of us have access to sophisticated geospatial technology on our phones and computers, and zoom meetings have redefined many bar-

riers of place and time. While maps and mapping can provide new and creative opportunities to frame and understand the world surrounding us—as well as our place in it—it is important to remember that these documents all have biases and agendas built in. Most are not inherently nefarious, but by and large, the Western cartographic legacy is built on colonial foundations that can continue to marginalize people and places. If you are lucky enough to get the opportunity to view the place you are in through an Indigenized or decolonial map, you should certainly take it.



Chelsea Rose is an archaeologist with the Southern Oregon University Laboratory of Anthropology (SOULA) and co-host of Underground History, a monthly segment that airs during the Jefferson Exchange on JPR's News & Information service.



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why no dogs?

Why aren't dogs allowed in Lithia Park?

Lithia Park is one of two parks in Ashland that do not allow dogs. Protecting wildlife in Lithia Park is a priority. Dogs can have an impact on wildlife, historical elements and the landscape.

What if I keep my dog on a leash?

Wildlife have acute senses and dogs can scare wildlife, even if it is only the scent of a dog.

Where are dogs allowed?

Dogs are allowed **ON LEASH** in 14 parks in Ashland and **ON LEASH** within the Ashland Trails System. Dogs are allowed off leash at The Dog Park.

Where can I get more info?

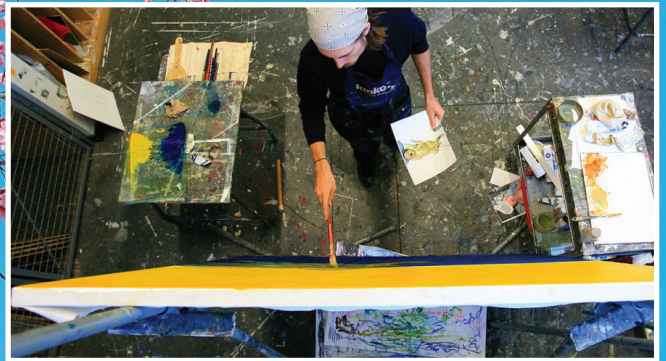
Complete info, including ADA compliant service dog guidelines and who to call if you see a dog that is non-compliant, at ashland.or.us/DogFriendly.



Only ADA compliant service dogs are allowed in Lithia Park—THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!



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Sardinian Herb Soup With Fregola And White Beans (S'erbuzzu)

Traditionally, the Sardinian soup called s'erbuzzu is jammed with wild herbs and greens—sometimes more than 17 varieties. And with both fregola (a pea-like Sardinian pasta) and white beans in the mix, the soup is as hearty and starchy as it is herbal. For our version, we narrowed the list of herbs and greens to those we felt had the most impact: parsley for grassiness, tarragon for sweet anise notes and arugula for pepperiness. We also use pancetta to build savory backbone and ricotta salata cheese, as Sardinians do, for complexity. If you can't find fregola, substitute an equal amount of pearl couscous, but cook it for only 5 minutes before adding the beans, parsley and garlic. And if ricotta salata is not available, finely grated pecorino Romano is a reasonable swap, but halve the amount.

Don't forget to reserve the minced parsley stems separately from the chopped leaves. The stems go into the pot early on so they soften and infuse the broth with their herbal, mineral flavor; the leaves are added near the end so they retain their freshness and color.

45 MINUTES / 4 SERVINGS

Ingredients

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more to serve
3–4 ounces pancetta, chopped
1 bunch flat-leaf parsley, stems minced, leaves roughly chopped, reserved separately
1½ teaspoons fennel seeds
½ cup dry white wine

Kosher salt and ground black pepper
2 quarts low-sodium chicken broth
¾ cup fregola
15½ ounce can large white beans, such as butter beans, rinsed and drained
3 medium garlic cloves, minced
4 ounces ricotta salata cheese, crumbled (¾ cup)
4 ounces baby arugula (about 6 cups lightly packed), roughly chopped
½ cup lightly packed fresh tarragon, chopped

Directions

1. In a large pot over medium, heat the oil and pancetta. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the pancetta is browned, 6 to 8 minutes. Stir in the parsley stems and fennel seeds, then add the wine and 1 teaspoon pepper, scraping up any browned bits. Bring to a simmer over medium-high and cook, stirring, until most of the moisture has evaporated, 2 to 3 minutes.
2. Add the broth and bring to a boil over high. Stir in the fregola and cook, stirring occasionally and adjusting heat to maintain a simmer, until the fregola is just shy of tender, about 10 minutes. Add the beans, garlic, parsley leaves and half of the ricotta salata, then continue to cook, stirring occasionally and adjusting the heat to maintain a bare simmer, until the fregola is fully tender, about another 10 minutes.
3. Off heat, stir in the arugula and tarragon, then taste and season with salt and pepper. Serve sprinkled with the remaining ricotta salata and drizzled with additional oil.

Christopher Kimball's Milk Street in downtown Boston—at 177 Milk Street—is home to the editorial offices and cooking school. It also is where they record *Christopher Kimball's Milk Street* television and radio shows. *Milk Street* is changing how we cook by searching the world for bold, simple recipes and techniques. For more information, go to 177milkstreet.com. You can hear *Milk Street Radio* Sundays at 3:00pm on JPR's *News & Information* service.

CHER SIDES
ANN STALEY

Just a Few Steps Outside

dawn
the glow of
thimbleberries
* * *
sun dazzles on water
osprey peers beyond
the mirror
* * *
panicked ducks' wings flash
vine maples' fragile reflection
a red scrawl
* * *
first rain
outside my back door
jewels in the grass
* * *
cold gray clouds sag low
over marsh spit sleet and snow
frogs go on singing
* * *
red dusk
cries of wild geese settle down
the night

— Cher Sides

Cher Sides is a retired nurse, a happy Oregon transplant by way of New England and California. She is a self-described “woodsie” whose writings are usually founded in observations of nature. Her short poems represent an appeal to return to our original heartland, to our roots as beings in nature where we may find wisdom and spiritual healing in these troubled times. Cher lives with her husband Bill at forest's edge in Bandon, Oregon.

Birds & Wings

—with thanks to Robert Bly

It's all right if Cassat goes on painting the same mother and daughter.
It's all right if the tea tastes too sweet in my mouth.
It's all right if Cecily drags all her possessions in the grocery cart.

The last plum blossom hangs on through April's downpour.
We wait months and months for the rock to move toward us.
The conifer-green hills catch every setting sun.

It's all right if I feel this same longing until I die.
A longing I have earned gives more nourishment
than the joy I won at your table last week.

It's all right if the redbird's nest fills with snow.
Why should the poet complain if her notebook is empty
at dusk? It only means the bird will live another night.

It's all right if we turn in all our keys tonight.
It's all right if we give up longing for the sunset's green flash.
It's all right if the one I love never reaches the shore.

If we're already so close to death, why should we complain?
Ann, you've hiked so many trails to hear the owl's call.
It's all right if you need wings on the way back.

— Ann Staley

Ann Staley was born and raised in the Keystone State and arrived in the Beaver State after a two-year stint as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Brazil. She has four published collections of poetry, most recently *The Age of Bronze* (Lincoln Press, 2017). Ann has taught for 40 years in Oregon at high schools, community college, and public and private universities, and attended the first workshops honoring Peter Elbow's processes of coming to writing, the Oregon Writing Project, in 1980. She worked at Lewis and Clark's Northwest Writing Institute for two decades. Like all writers, she is most comfortable with a pen in her (left) hand.

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